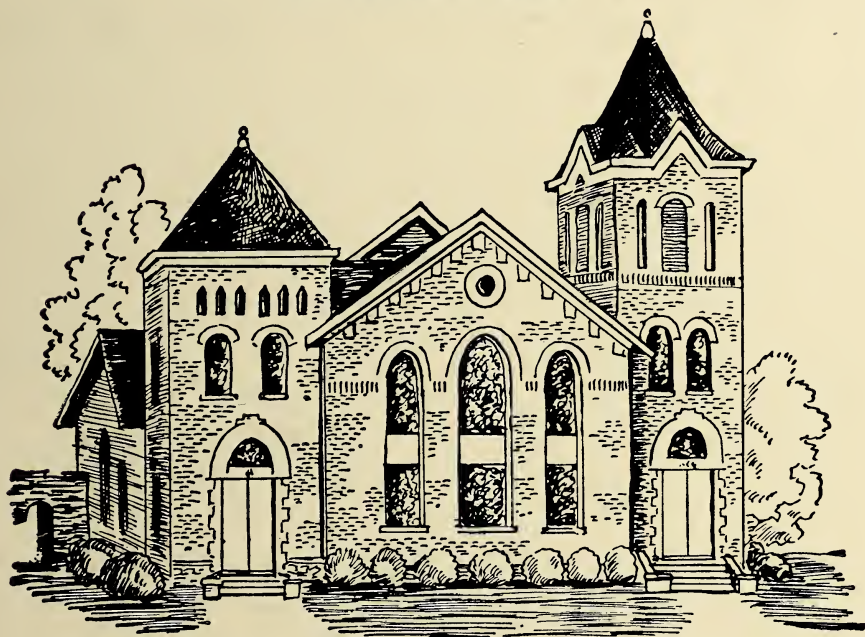


# **Laborers Together**

## **A HISTORY**



**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**SPRING HOPE, N. C.**

**1889-1989**

**Lena Morgan**

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# **LABORERS TOGETHER**



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# **Laborers Together**

A History of First Baptist Church  
Spring Hope, North Carolina  
1889-1989

by  
Lena Waller Morgan

# We Love The Venerable House

We love the venerable house  
Our fathers built to God;  
In heaven are kept their grateful vows,  
Their dust endears the sod.

Here holy thoughts a light have shed  
From many a radiant face,  
And prayers of humble virtue spread  
The perfume of the place.

And anxious hearts have pondered here  
The mystery of life,  
And prayed th' Eternal Light to clear  
Their doubts and aid their strife.

They live with God, their homes are dust;  
Yet here their children pray,  
And in the fleeting life-time trust  
To find the narrow way.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

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This work is dedicated lovingly to the loyal members of  
First Baptist Church whose labors together have played  
an important role in its one hundred year history.

NCC GIFT

“For we are labourers together with God.”  
—1 Corinthians 3:9



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Others who provided information were Dr. John Woodard, N.C. Baptist Historical Collection, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, and Dr. W.R. McCollum, former Director of Missions, Tar River Association. My appreciation extends locally to my beloved pastor Creech for encouragement and patience, and to Mrs. C.H. Brogden, Mrs. R.B. White, Mrs. Gwen Walker, Mrs. Bobby Brantley, Mrs. Carolyn Cale, Mr. and Mrs. J.B. Weaver, Mr. and Mrs. Roland Geddie, J.T. Edwards, Mr. and Mrs. G.W. Bunn, Jr., Rev. Herman Finch, Mrs. Jessie Mae Gay, Mrs. Earl

Cummings, Miss Corinne Pridgeon, Mrs. M.V. Parrish, Jennifer Purkerson, Mrs. Wanda Long, Tarboro, and Theo. Davis Sons, printers in Zebulon.

Finally, my thanks to friends who supported me patiently during the long months it took to complete the writing. Most especially I am grateful to my family who boosted my morale when I was sorely tempted to give up the project; to my son, John, whose never-failing faith in me and my efforts, strengthened my determination to continue; to my late daughter, Mary, who typed and edited the first three chapters before her untimely death; and especially to my son, David, who has helped me over many rough spots that I may not have been able to conquer without him. My gratitude is sincere and deep for every encouragement from all sources too many to enumerate. Blessings on every one.

Lena Waller Morgan

July 25, 1988  
Spring Hope, N.C.

# INTRODUCTION

This account was written to preserve the story of life in First Baptist Church, Spring Hope, North Carolina, for a period of time that will fade into history. It covers a period that even now has almost faded away, and it covers the present period which will diminish inevitably as time passes. The labor will continue, however, for it is in God's plan that His work will never cease from the face of this earth.

When first commissioned by the church to compile this history, I realized that the task would be unusually difficult. I doubted that I had the depth of knowledge or the expertise to delve into one hundred years of the work of the church. Nevertheless, I resolved to try because a history of First Baptist had never been written.

In anticipation of celebrating its centennial in 1989, the church designated me in 1983 to record a story of its activities from its birth. I have been a member of the church since 1935, over half its life. As I began the project, I turned to Webster's dictionary for a definition of history:

**History;** Greek history, meaning information knowing;

1. A narrative of events, especially a systematic account of events affecting a state, a region, or institution; 2. a study dealing with the writing and presentation of such a narrative; 3. events which form the subject matter of such a narrative.

Research began. The first steps were unrewarding. To my consternation there were no records preserved locally for the first ten years of the church's life. This was shocking. Bits and pieces of data were gathered here and there for random years. There may be records somewhere, but they are not in possession of the church. It was estimated by the Historical Committee of the North Carolina Baptist Convention that the project would take at least four years. It has taken more than five and there is still much that might be discovered if more records could be found.

In order to present a reasonably accurate account, I could not rely totally on legends and memories. Memories are colored by the perspective of the person who recalls the events. Facts recorded at the time things took place can be accepted as reliable. It seemed logical to go to the Tar River and Roanoke Associations' reports as a main source of information for the

missing years. Those reports are but a skeleton of the body of work the church has done. First Baptist Church has belonged to Tar River, then Roanoke and at present belongs once again to Tar River Association. The Library at Southeastern Theological Seminary in Wake Forest provided the framework on which to build the narrative.

The Association records brought insight and understanding that the local Baptist Church grew in spite of the lack of records. Much questioning of long-time members ensued. Some of these people were born and reared in Spring Hope and continue to live here. They have been a great help in piecing parts of the puzzle together. Their patience must have been tried with my persistence, but they never displayed impatience; rather, they were most interested and willing to help. No member is living today who experienced the founding of the local church one hundred years ago, but some were able to recall hearing about certain people and events, but could not be sure of the time frame.

Growth and development have taken place due to a unified purpose to strengthen Christian faith, grow in grace and character, and the need to worship. Each individual who has been associated with the church has had a part in shaping its history. There have been gains and losses, encouragements and disappointments, harmonies and discords, and joys and sorrows. Because it is a Missionary Baptist Church, it has experienced a wide variety of relationships. It has reached out to support missions within its membership, within the community, in the state and nation, and in countries around the world through prayer and gifts.

Knowing its story helps one to know how he is related to the church. Such knowledge is useful in choosing concerns and priorities. Traditions today, that were already old when present members became associated, are shared by all the members. The general story of First Baptist Church is the result of much investigative effort. It is an attempt to recall reverently how God has worked out His purpose through the members of His body in this church. It provides, as well, a key to enter the past unrecorded history. In no way does it portray all the singular events that took place nor all the individuals involved in those events. It does reveal the range of activity, the spirit and character of the members and the physical improvements made.

It is with gratitude for the faith in me and with Christian love for my church and for my fellow workers that I present this record. Please accept it in the spirit that it has been written!

Lena Waller Morgan

July 25, 1988  
Spring Hope, N.C.

## CHAPTER ONE

# The Early Church 1889-1909

Let us begin the record by looking at the background in which the First Baptist Church of Spring Hope, North Carolina was initiated. The town itself was incorporated on February 25, 1889, by the General Assembly. Spring Hope is situated in Nash County about a mile east of the Tar River on the town's south side. At that period in history, most towns were settled on or near streams and rivers because of necessary water supplies for consumption and travel. That was not the case for the town of Spring Hope. In 1889 the terminus of the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad was located in the area that is now Spring Hope. The railroad company intended to extend the line across Tar River to Raleigh, but in 1887 land could not be purchased further west. As a result the line was stopped west beyond the present library. A turntable for the engine was installed, and a depot building and commissary were erected. The depot building was named Spring Hope Depot, because it was nearest to a small community (Spring Hope) four miles southeast on the Sappony Creek. That community dwindled after the railroad came, and the business center transferred to the end of the railroad line. The Spring Hope Depot building still stands today and houses the Spring Hope Public Library.

The town had been surveyed in 1887 by Mack Brantley (see map, Deed Book 78, page 474, Register of Deeds Office, Nash Co., N.C.). A one-mile square area with the center at the east end of the depot was mapped. Lots for building purposes were numbered and streets were indicated. The people who had located here wanted to name the town Spring Hope and petitioned the General Assembly for a charter. The population of the town in 1890 (Branson's Business Directory, 1890) numbered fifty. There was one church, Shocco, which stands on South Poplar Street. That was for blacks only. It still stands today.

The story goes that the railroad officials made an offer to the effect that



land on which to build a church would be donated to the first organized church in the Town of Spring Hope. Actually, the deed for the land on which the First Baptist Church is built did not name the railroad at all nor did it indicate that any of the signers were thus affiliated. This story must be accepted as legend or not presently verifiable.

How does a new church begin? It seems that in someone's nature there must have been a need to worship and a desire for a sense of Christian fellowship. There must have been a longing for a place where worshipers could meet together, as God's witnesses, to strengthen and support one another in faith and witness to others. There were those who felt those needs for this small town. Out of the needs grew action.

Let us see what action was taken. It is not known exactly who the prime mover was nor how many were present when the first meeting was held. It was necessary to call together a Presbytery (a group of ordained ministers or elders) to meet with the interested parties so that the transactions would be acceptable to God and compatible with church standards. No matter who the prime mover was, the meeting was called. The original minutes of that first and second meeting are preserved in the original longhand and read as follows:

Spring Hope, N.C.

December 29, 1889

A Presbytery consisting of Rev. G.M. Duke, G.W. Coppedge and R.D. Harper met at the above named place and time for the purpose of organizing a Missionary Baptist Church. Brother G.M. Duke preached an appropriate and impressive sermon after which Brother Duke was elected Moderator and R.D. Harper, Clerk of the meeting.

Letters of dismission were presented by Brother J.A. Bridges, Spencer Wheless, W.H. Culpepper and Sister Henrietta O. Cone, from their respective churches, and read by the clerk.

The Articles of Faith that are contained in Hiscox Baptist Church Directory were then read and adopted also the church covenant after which Brother W.H. Culpepper was elected Deacon and Bro. Spencer Wheless, Church Clerk.

It was agreed that the Church should be given the name Spring Hope Baptist Church. The Moderator then extended the right hand of fellowship. We were then led in prayer by Bro. Duke after which the Doxology was sung and then we were dismissed by Bro. G.W. Coppedge.

G.W. Duke, Moderator, (pro tem)

R.D. Harper, Clerk (pro tem)



Spring Hope, N.C.  
December 30, 1889

Spring Hope Baptist Church met in conference, and J.A. Bridges was elected Moderator. W.H. Culpepper and Spencer Wheless was appointed Trustees of Spring Hope Baptist Church, then adjourned.

J.A. Bridges, Moderator  
Spence Wheless, Clerk

These minutes were among the personal properties of the B. Cleveland Delbridge estate in 1981. Mr. Delbridge was the son-in-law of the W.H. Culpepper named in those first minutes. The William C. Delbridge Family cared enough to have them framed and to present them to the First Baptist Church. They hang on the north wall of the Educational Building in the Assembly Hall.

Reverend Duke was pastor at a Franklin County church. Duke Memorial was named for him after his death in 1918. Reverend Coppedge is believed to have been minister at Ephesus. Rev. R.D. Harper was a native of Nash County. It has not been learned where he was pastor.

The meeting place in Spring Hope for the organization of the church is not known, nor is there a record of how many attended. All that is certain are the date, the town, and the name of the church, the first clerk, and the four original members who produced their church letters in December, 1889. W.H. Culpepper was an early merchant in town, having a store on Main Street. He moved to Franklin County in 1906. Spencer Wheless was brother to George A. Wheless, Jeweler. He and Mrs. Wheless moved to Wakefield in Wake County in December, 1906.

J.A. Bridges is said to have been principal of Spring Hope Academy, a private school in its second year. It was located on South Pine Street adjacent to the Town equipment parking lot. Parts of the house still stand as two houses today. Mrs. Cone was the wife of Burtis Cone, a Nash County native, who came when the railroad reached the area. Cone, manager and co-owner of a time business (Branch, Cone and Company), had moved his family here before the town was chartered. Mrs. Cone brought her letter from the Baptist Church in Wilson.

Services were held once a month on Sunday afternoon in an unoccupied frame building on the southwest corner of Pine and Nash Streets. For a few months the preachers were those who were invited to come for one Sunday at the time. In 1890, J.A. Bridges, Elder, as reported to Tar River Association, was holding services. He was ordained in 1891. In a taped interview with Mrs. Annie Cone Baines in 1966, Mrs. Baines recalled that, as a child, she attended those early services and sat on a plank that was

placed across nail kegs. Mrs. Baines was the daughter of Mrs. Henrietta Octavia Cone, charter member.

During the year 1890, the following members were admitted to the church body:

Mrs. Mamie Bergerson, by letter, March 23, 1890

Mrs. Emily Wheless, by letter, March 23, 1890

J.J. Spivey, by experience, July 22, 1890

George W. Bunn, by experience, July 23, 1890

George W. Joyner, by letter, August 22, 1890

Mrs. Eudora M. Owen, by letter, October, 1890

Mrs. Katie Bunn, by letter, October, 1890

Mrs. Ella Joyner, by letter, October, 1890

Baptismal rites were performed that summer for three males at George W. Joyner's pond. The Association minutes stated in 1890 that there were thirteen members of the church, five of whom were males. Records have not indicated who the thirteenth member was.

At the annual Conference of the Tar River Association held in Greenville, N.C., on October 9, 10, 11, 1890, the new church at Spring Hope:

Presented their letter with covenant, articles of faith, etc., which letter was referred to Committee: B. Cade, J.W. Powell, J.W. Sledge, who recommended their reception ... Elder J.A. Bridges has been preaching at Spring Hope, Nash County, the present terminus of Rocky Mount-Nashville R.R. Baptized several at that place, and organized a church which was admitted a member of your body yesterday.

October 9, 10, 1890

The local report was sent to the Association by S.M. Wheless, Church Clerk. He reported three baptisms, five received by letter, membership of thirteen (composed of seven males and six females). The pastor's salary was \$100.00 annually. The Sunday School Superintendent was J.T. Fulford. There were nine officers and teachers and eighty-five students. It should be explained that all denominations attended Sunday School every Sunday afternoon. This was indicated in a diary that George W. Bunn kept for the year 1890. Sunday School expenses for that year amounted to \$6.00. Incidental expenses were \$8.00. \$1.50 went for repairs. Total expenditures were \$159.90. The church gave to no missions nor to the orphanage. Preaching services were held on second Sundays. It was during 1890 that the Methodist Church in Spring Hope was organized.

Legend is that the two young churches met on different Sundays in a one-room schoolhouse on Walnut Street. The building was used for school,

community debates and activities, and for church services and Sunday School. Reverend Bridges remained as the Baptist minister until the 1894 report to the Association conference in October at Scotland Neck. George W. Bunn, church clerk, reported a membership of 43; the pastor's annual salary, \$75.00; paid the Association, \$5.00; the orphanage, \$5.00; and 75 cents to the minutes fund; a total expenditure of \$85.75. M. A. Griffin, Superintendent of Sunday School, reported a student enrollment of 75, with seven teachers and officers; cost, \$4.00.

Today, disagreement arises concerning the date of erecting a church building. There is nothing in the Association minutes until after 1895 to indicate that there was a building. Many years ago, a newspaper item stated that the First Baptist Church building was erected in 1890. Research in the Register of Deeds office, Nash County, Book 85, page 426, states that the deed to Lots 23, 24 and 25 (on the southwest corner of Walnut and Nash Streets) were transferred by:

J.H. Hunter, trustee for B.H. Bunn and heirs, to John T. Fulford, Spencer M. Wheless and Henry B. Farrell, deacons of Spring Hope Baptist Church and their successors in office and shall have perpetual succession so long as the same shall be used for the service of the Missionary Baptist Church provided however that whenever said lands shall not be used for purpose herein specified, it shall go in fee simple to B.H. Bunn and his heirs and assigns, as I hold the same in trust for him.

The deed was dated December 31, 1894. It was signed by J.H. Hunter, witnessed by B.H. Bunn, proven before the Clerk of the Court, M.B. Williford, and registered on January 8, 1895, by J.H.T. Baker, Register of Deeds. There is a legend that B.W. Upchurch walked to Nashville to file the deed.

B.H. Bunn was a North Carolina congressman from Rocky Mount. J.H. Hunter was a Rocky Mount real estate broker and acting attorney for B.H. Bunn. The deacons named in the deed had become members of the church on the following dates: John T. Fulford, February 28, 1892; Spencer Wheless, December 29, 1889; and Henry B. Farrell, February 26, 1893. Mr. Upchurch (who is said to have filed the deed) became a member on June 2, 1899. It is reasonable to believe that a church building was not erected on property then owned by the church. Therefore, the 1890 date mentioned in the news item seems unlikely to be authentic. It was not until after 1895 that Spring Hope Baptist Church reported to the Association that church property was valued at \$700.00 and the building had a seating capacity of 200.

From time to time, it was reported to the Association that some

members had been excluded from the fellowship. It was a common practice in the early church to exclude individual members whose behavior was unbecoming, for reasons such as profanity, drunkenness, selling liquor, dancing, etc. The person excluded could be restored to the fellowship provided the individual appeared before the church body, confessed his errors, asked for forgiveness, and promised to strive to lead a more moral life. Fortunately, most were restored to the fellowship. This practice continued for many years, at least until the 1920s. Eight people were excluded in 1908; in 1924, thirteen were excluded.

New members by 1895, when the white frame church is believed by the writer to have been constructed, included Mrs. Roxy Wilder, W.B. Wheless, Mrs. Pearl S. Sanders, Mrs. Bettie Rountree, S.A. Marshbourn, A.E. Bridges, C.B. Barber, Miss Nannie Barber, Miss Mary E. Biggs, Miss Delia Edwards, Rev. John T. Fulford, H.B. Farrell, Mrs. W.R. Farrell, Lee Green, Mrs. Julia Green, and Mrs. J.D. Luper. The membership numbered forty-two. W.C. Nowell was pastor at a salary of \$75.00 annually. He led the church for two years. No members were gained during his tenure. His salary for 1896 was reported at \$25.00. Rev. J.W. Powell served the church during 1897 and 1898. The number of members did not grow, with membership at forty (fourteen males and twenty-six females). Perhaps the work toward completing and furnishing the new church was so intense that increasing the number of members was not stressed. Perhaps the town population was at a relative standstill. For whatever reasons, the years from 1893 to 1899 were years of slow growth in membership.

By 1900 the population of Spring Hope in the Federal Census stood at 500. Many new members had been gained at Spring Hope Baptist Church and were reported to the Association at Warren Plains that year. Reverend Joseph E. Hocutt, who lived near Stanhope, accepted the pastorate in 1899. His annual salary was \$125.00 for service on second and third Sundays each month. Membership increased by thirty-seven that year (twenty-four had been baptized, sixteen accepted by letter, and only three lost by letter). The church's gift to all missions was \$11.25. Only once before was a record found that stated its gift to missions. In 1896 the report showed that Spring Hope Church gave \$8.65 that year - a rather odd amount considering that the church was organized as a missionary Baptist church.

Women's work was first mentioned in the Association in 1893. It was recommended that each Sunday School have a missionary department for the study of missions on one Sunday per month. Pastors were to assist the sisters in organizing Woman's Missionary Unions. It was not until 1898 that a Ladies' Aid was reported within the Association. Spring Hope was not reported as having the women organized. The first report of women's work in the local church appeared after 1908. (See chapter on Women's Work.)



On October 16, 1900, the Tar River Association met in the Spring Hope Baptist Church. Reverend Hocutt's annual salary was raised to \$140.00. There were forty-three males and forty-four female members, totalling eighty-seven. Two members were restored to the fellowship that year. \$14.00 was pledged to all missions. The same year, the envelope plan for collecting money for the pastor's salary was initiated in the local church. The balance due on the pump organ needed to be collected. Rev. Hocutt volunteered to canvass members to raise the balance due. This was accomplished.

The following year, the apportionment of members for part of the pastor's salary was made and a record kept of what had been paid and what was due by each member. This was to be read in church conference on a quarterly basis. Any member failing to pay would be called before the church. One member and his wife withdrew their memberships, because they did not want to belong to a church which dictated how much they had to pay. The records show that in less than six months they had asked to be reinstated and complied with the envelope plan. A sexton was employed for \$2.00 per month. There was a roll call of all male members at each monthly conference. Any male who was absent for three consecutive conferences would be called on by a committee to ascertain the cause of his absence. This practice was followed for several years.

Rev. Hocutt moderated the Church Conference on January 19, 1902. "Brothers Spivey and Upchurch were appointed to recommend the best manner and material and cost of enclosing church grounds to prevent driving of team, buggies, wagons, etc. on same, to report at 4th Sunday night Conference." In March that committee reported the total cost of fencing the church grounds would be \$25.00 or \$30.00 for a wire fence. "Motion prevailed to accept the report of the committee and discharge same. A Committee to get up the money for the fence was named: E.O. Morgan, J.T. Fulford, and W.B. Wheless." At the very next meeting in April, the committee reported that they were unable to raise the money. They were instructed to continue their efforts. In August, 1902, the committee was discharged. In August, 1903, one year later, "Brother J.T. Fulford, J.J. Spivey and G.W. Bunn were appointed to have the church wired in, make out an account for same and present to the church." On September 13, 1903, "Brother J.T. Fulford, being chairman of the fence committee, 'presented account for material to the amount of \$8.43 was allowed and paid (sic) and committee discharged.'" It is presumed that the labor was donated by male members.

Rev. Hocutt resigned in December, 1902, to accept a Baptist church ministry at Bethel, N.C. Rev. A.C. Wilcox answered the call of Spring Hope Baptist Church to serve as pastor here. He indicated that he would move his

family to Spring Hope. They lived on the northwest corner of Walnut and Nash Streets in the cottage diagonally opposite the church. Since Mr. Bridges, the first pastor, this church had not had a resident pastor. Willcox began to serve in January, 1903. He also served the Samaria, Peachtree, and Stanhope churches while he was here. It was during Mr. Willcox's pastorate that the wire fence was placed around the church. New members were admitted, some moved away taking their church letters with them, and still others were excluded or restored. Small donations continued sporadically by the church to Association missions, the orphanage, or state missions. Mrs. Bob Coppedge, Miss Pearl Wheless, John Privette, and S. Weathersby were baptized at G.W. Joyner's pond on September 24, 1905. Church affairs went along as usual until Rev. Willcox tendered his resignation on October 8, 1905, effective January 1, 1906. He was called to serve a Baptist church in Rocky Mount. J.J. Spivey, John Odum, and G.W. Bunn were appointed to confer with the deacons for the purpose of calling a pastor for 1906. G.A. Martin served as interim pastor through July, 1906, at which time former pastor W.C. Nowell agreed to serve the church for the balance of the year at \$10.00 a month. He continued to minister to Spring Hope Baptists until September, 1908. On September 23, 1907, the church voted to have the pump organ cleaned.

Tar River Association had grown so large that it was agreed at the fall meeting in Henderson in 1907 that all churches in the association east of the main line of the railroad would form a new association. The churches involved would take proper steps to disassociate themselves from Tar River Association before the Association Conference in 1908.

Rev. Nowell moderated the church conference in a called session in April, 1908. The purpose of the meeting was to select a committee for planning the repair of the frame church or for the building of a new church. J.J. Spivey, J.H. Williams, and George W. Bunn were named. On June 14, a plan for repairing was submitted by J.J. Spivey. Williams stated that he had a plan, but he did not submit it. It seems the committee could not agree. They were dismissed from duty until after the July meeting. Nothing more was recorded concerning repairing for some time until April 21. (See July, 1908)

Women's work in the local church had not yet been reported to the Association although work was being done by them. The first evidence found in the local records that named women in the business of the church was September 27, 1908. "Sister A.F. May and Sister Dollie Tunnell and Brother J.H. Williams and J.T. Fulford" were named on a committee "to go around and see the members of the church and see what each would give toward the preacher's salary." Rev. Nowell resigned at this same September meeting. A.B. Harrell, Superintendent of Spring Hope Graded Schools, served in the interim (October through December, 1908).

The following is recorded in the local church conference minutes of October 11, 1909:

Resolved: that the clerk be instructed to apply for a letter of dismissal of the Spring Hope Baptist Church from the Tar River Association for the purpose of connecting ourselves with the new association and which resolution was passed by a large majority of votes and the clerk so instructed. J.T. Fulford, Moderator, J.A. Marshbourne, Clerk.

In 1908 the new Roanoke Association met for the first time in Rocky Mount. Spring Hope, along with other churches of the area, had become a part of Roanoke Association.

On January 10, 1908, it is stated that, at its regular monthly conference, a committee composed of Bro. J.T. Fulford, W.B. Wheless, and G.W. Bunn, was appointed to "get a preacher for this year. J.T. Fulford, Moderator, J.A. Marshbourne, Clerk." A special called meeting was held three days later on January 13, 1909. It was voted that a call to minister here would be extended to "Brother Putnam." There were no minutes for February and March, 1909. Reverend D.F. Putnam moderated the April 21, 1909, conference. It is not recorded at what date he accepted the call. On that date the record reads: "The committee previously appointed to consider the matter of building a Baptist church and make recommendation rendered a report as follows." The recommendation was not recorded. The one later conference recorded in that minute book is dated September 17, 1911. It reads: "In regular conference. Their was a motion by the church to elect delegates to the Association the following Brothers elected Walter Buck Dr. Chamblee and W.N. Gardner. No other busines motion adjourn was carried. Mod. D.F. Putnam J.A. Marshbourne Clk."

The statistical record in Roanoke Association minutes recorded at the conference held in Greenville reveals the following for Spring Hope Baptist Church: Membership, eighty; ten by letter, eight by baptism; eight excluded, three dismissed by letter; Sunday School, 125, J.H. Williams, Supt.; Clerk, J.A. Marshbourne; Contributions, \$330.98; Messengers, G.W. Joyner and S. Goode.

Calculations from records found show a total of 148 had affiliated with the church by baptism or by letter, a total of fifty-eight had been given letters of removal to other churches, nine had died, and one had been permanently excluded. It must be remembered that the town population at this period of Spring Hope history was constantly changing. People were moving into town and out of town at frequent intervals. Business opportunities were brought about by the establishment of new businesses—some successful, others failing. The people associated with the businesses moved where the

best chances were for making a good living. Spring Hope's population did not level off until around 1915.

For a list of members for the first frame church, see Appendix B.



## CHAPTER TWO

# The Growing Church 1909-1929

The decision had been made to erect a new brick church by 1909. Plans had been approved. Perhaps the idea of building had been on individual minds for some time. Electricity had been provided for Spring Hope customers (Town Board Minutes, July 1, 1904). The population had reached more than 1,000. This was more than double the Federal Census of 1900 which gave Spring Hope's population at 500. The church was growing and the needs for the future were being considered.

At church conference, October 14, 1906, the validity of the deed to the property conveyed by B.H. Bunn was questioned. After discussion, a committee composed of J.J. Spivey and B.W. Upchurch was appointed to contact Bunn in order to get a better deed. At a later conference (February 10, 1907), the committee recommended that the church deed should be allowed to stand as filed. The church approved the recommendation. Later, Mrs. B. H. Bunn, on July 10, 1910, signed a quitclaim of the property to "J.T. Fulford, J.H. Williams, W.B. Wheless and George W. Bunn, deacons of the Spring Hope Missionary Baptist Church," thereby relinquishing her rights to Lots 23, 24, 25, being the property conveyed to the church by J.H. Hunter, acting attorney for B.H. Bunn (Deed Book 184, page 488, Nash County, N.C.)

It is not known when Spring Hope Missionary Baptist Church became First Baptist Church. There are no available records to help in determining the change or the exact date that the initial construction of the new building took place. The cornerstone on the northeast corner of the brick building at Walnut and Nash Streets reads:

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
1909

There is evidence that funds were being raised in 1909 and 1910 to pay for the cost of the building. It is reported that James T. Webb estate, owner of Webb's Mill at Tar River, gave the first \$1,000.00 toward the project. He was a loyal member of Ephesus Baptist Church and was a benefactor to many churches in the area. Spring Hope Baptist Church placed his name in one of the stained glass windows in the south wall of the new sanctuary. The men were busy canvassing businesses and members for funds. It is said that the Ladies' Aid, forerunner of the Woman's Missionary Society in the local church, pledged \$1,000.00. This pledge they honored in 1910. They are said to have bought the carpet at a cost of \$350.00. The money had been raised by various projects, such as making and raffling quilts, selling woven spreads, afghans or "throws" (as they called them), and handwork of all kinds. They held rummage sales, ice cream suppers, box parties, and sold eggs, cakes, and other baked goods, as well as extra produce from their gardens. They were extremely active in accumulating funds for the new construction.

Finally, on July 22, 1910, the church empowered Trustees J.T. Fulford, J.H. Williams, and W.B. Wheless to borrow \$500.00 from the Farmers and Merchants Bank of Spring Hope, due January 1, 1911, at 6% net, mortgaging Lots 23, 24, 25 being 141' x 47 1/2' as described in Deed Book 73, page 474, Nash County, N.C. The loan was recorded in Deed Book 183, page 371, Nash County, N.C.

The white frame church was removed from the corner and settled on the south end of the church property facing Walnut Street. The wire fence was not replaced. Use of this building for services continued, while the new construction was in progress. A fire survey map made for the Town of Spring Hope, N.C., March, 1911, by Sanborn Map Company of New York City, shows the frame structure there and the brick building at its present location. The map states: "Spring Hope, N.C., population, 1300; water facilities, not good; no steam and no hand engines; no horse cart; no hook and ladder truck." A plot of the "Baptist Church" on the Walnut-Nash Street corner describes the building as "a brick structure; heat; furnace; electricity; 20' to eaves."

Services would be adequately lighted for the first time. Four suspended light fixtures were placed. Heat would be relatively uniform, provided by use of wood and coal in the furnace. There would be seven small rooms for Sunday School classes and for committee meetings. The pump organ, which had been purchased in 1900, was cleaned and installed. A choir loft was included. It seemed that everything would be in readiness by October, 1910, for the Roanoke Association meeting to be held in the new church.

Such was not the case. The windows had not been put in place. Neither had all the pews been installed. Not to be outdone, resourceful Rev. Putnam

personally placed bagging over the blank window openings to keep out the glare. He is said to have placed a few boards across nail kegs to use for seats if needed. The meeting was held as scheduled. Surely the members and Pastor Putnam were proud to host the Association in their new and beautiful church. Likely, they felt a real sense of accomplishment and that all their efforts were rewarded.

The third Roanoke Association met in the Spring Hope Church as scheduled. A.B. Harrell, former interim pastor, gave the welcome that day. He was also ordained as a minister here on that same day. Shortly thereafter, he became pastor of the Arlington Street Baptist Church in Rocky Mount. The local church report to that conference was incomplete, stating merely, "Pastor, D.F. Putnam; building a new building; contributions, \$5,768.88."

As a note of interest, two weeks later, the first funeral held in the new church was for J.J. Spivey, who died on October 27, 1910. The first wedding is said to have been that of Spivey's daughter Carrie Leigh Spivey, age 19, and J. Fred Stevens, age 30, on July 6, 1910. Perhaps the building was complete enough for this to be true. The marriage record in the county courthouse states, "married at Spring Hope."

Reverend Putnam was a very energetic man. He was also a dynamic preacher and a sensitively caring pastor. He had moved to Spring Hope with his family in early 1909. Their home was directly in front of the new construction on Walnut Street. There he could keep an eye on the work in progress, and he was frequently seen donned in overalls assisting the workers. He climbed ladders, carrying mortar to the brick masons and did many odd jobs that he saw which needed to be done. He carried water and sometimes lemonade to the workers on hot days. Construction was well supervised. He seemed to put his whole heart and effort into the erection of the handsome brick structure.

Under Putnam's leadership, the church membership doubled from eighty to 153. The 1911 report of Spring Hope Baptist Church to the Association set his salary at \$500.00 per annum; services, first and third Sundays; church property, \$12,000.00; seating capacity, 500.

In April, 1911, M.H. Privette bought Lots 179, 180, 181, and 182, property on Walnut and Franklin Streets, a plot 300' x 47 1/2', for \$300.00. (Deed Book 186, page 552, Nash County, N.C.) He bought the old frame church for \$176.00 and used it in the construction of his home on North Walnut Street. The basis of the dining room in his home is said to have been the old sanctuary.

Rev. Putnam resigned at the end of the calendar year 1911, leaving behind the handsome edifice that was and still is a credit to his energy and effectiveness in this community, as well as to the industry of its members. One of the two rooms in the rear of the sanctuary was named the Putnam

Room in his honor. It was called the Putnam Room until the entire interior of the church was renovated in 1960. Truly, the church is a deep and abiding tribute to his service here.

After serving a church in Crews, Virginia, Reverend W.O. Rosser returned to his native North Carolina. He accepted a call to First Baptist Church beginning in January, 1912. He and his family lived on Bunn Alley East. The first year he held services on first, second, and third Sundays and received an annual salary of \$800.00. Those old enough now to recall the years of his pastorate were too young in 1912 to remember much about him except by hearing what their elders said. They could only recall the name and where he lived. Statistics from the Spring Hope Church reported to the Association will have to suffice. In 1912 the Roanoke Association met at Weldon. The report of this church was as follows:

Spring Hope: pastor, W.O. Rosser; salary, \$800.00; meets first, second and third Sundays; clerk, J.A. Marshbourne; S.S. Supt., J.H. Williams; enrollment 100; 6 baptisms, 6 received by letter, 9 dismissed by letter, 1 death, total membership, 155, made up of 70 males, 85 females; contributions, \$1522.90; Messenger, W.O. Rosser.

The 1913 report to the Association in meeting at Scotland Neck reads:

Spring Hope: W.O. Rosser, pastor; salary \$600.00 per annum; services, first and third Sundays; repairs, \$1000.00; total expenditures, \$1951.39; membership, not recorded; S.S. Supt., J.H. Williams, 139 enrolled; Delegates, W.O. Rosser, W.B. Wheless, S.R. Pierce.

In 1914 at Arlington Street Baptist Church, Spring Hope's report placed Rosser's salary at \$500.00 annually for services on first and third Sundays. The membership had declined, while Sunday School had reached 170. Delegates were G.W. Joyner, A.F. May, S.R. Pierce, and W.O. Rosser.

There are no specific details for the \$1000.00 for repairs reported in 1913, but it is easy to note that the amount was the major item in a \$1951.39 total expenditure. It is fair to say that Rosser's service was not ineffective. Many were baptized or received into the church by letter; yet, many more had removed to other places, and at least two had died. The reader should be reminded that the nation was apprehensive because of strained foreign relations. By July 5, 1914, Germany had declared war on Russia and later, on France, while England had declared war on Germany. Materiel, clothing, and arms were needed to help our allies overseas. That meant the U.S. had stepped up operations in those plants and factories. Even the military was building more campsites in preparedness for war in case of active



involvement. With increased job opportunities came better pay and better job opportunities. War has a way of affecting lives economically, politically, socially, and spiritually. Spring Hope citizens were no different from the rest of the nation's citizens. Mobility was a fact because of bigger, better-paying jobs elsewhere. First Baptist was beginning to feel the pinch in its church life. The church was still collecting the pastor's salary as needed. Collections were poor and may have accounted for the decreases in salary.

Reverend Rosser handed in his resignation on October 7, 1914, to accept a pastorate at his home church in Whitakers, N.C. He served until the end of the year and moved his and Mrs. Rosser's letters on January 27, 1915. A.F. May, W.B. Wheless, and J.H. Williams were appointed as a committee to call another pastor. There were no church minutes located for the entire year of 1915 and only one in 1916, the month not noted. Minutes begin again for a call session on July 7, 1917, for special consideration of excluding members from the church.

The pulpit committee recommended Reverend Oscar W. Sawyer of Chincoteague, Virginia, as the new pastor. He was duly called and he accepted the position, coming to the church in January, 1915. His salary that year was \$550.00. He stayed here as pastor for two years. He seemed to have steered the church from its lethargy and to have awakened the members to higher spiritual values. The active functions of the full body were revitalized, and all phases of the work seemed to be growing. Mr. Sawyer was a single man and is said to have roomed in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Albert F. May. He must have been a forceful personality. The church report to the Association meeting in Robersonville stated that forty were baptized in 1915 and seventeen were admitted by letter. Twelve members moved away, and one death was reported. The total membership was 182. Sunday School Superintendent, O.B. Moss, reported 214 enrolled in Sunday School. Baptisms were held in the Tar River on the west bank below the dam at Webb's Mill. There was a sandy beach-like spot in that location. Sawyer's salary reached \$600.00.

While Reverend Sawyer was pastor, the \$500.00 mortgage incurred in 1910 was paid. The church was dedicated in June, 1916, when the mortgage papers were burned. Germany had begun a subversive campaign against American shipping. When the Lusitania was deliberately torpedoed in May of 1915, national military action was stepped up throughout the United States. When Germany announced unrestricted submarine warfare, President Wilson directed in March, 1917, that all U.S. merchant ships would be armed. He called a special session of Congress, and the war declaration was signed on April 6, 1917. That meant war, and all the nation were drawn into service. Spring Hope was no exception. The young men from the community and First Baptist Church were included among them. World

War I, the War of the Nations, had become total war affecting every facet of life.

Sawyer had resigned at the end of the calendar year of 1916, having pastored the church for two years. He returned to Spring Hope in May, 1917, to marry a local girl with whom he had fallen in love during his pastorate here. He, at age 29, married Miss Addie Taylor, age 23, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Will Taylor of Spring Hope. They were married on May 14, 1917, in T.C. May's dining room (west Railroad Street). Sawyer was interim pastor for three months (January, February and March, 1917).

Reverend H.B. Hines accepted the call to serve the Spring Hope Church as pastor in April, 1917. He came from a mission field in Hyde County. He agreed to hold services four Sundays in the month. For the first time, this church had a full time pastor. However, he served Peachtree and Macedonia as part-time minister while he was here. His salary would be \$1000.00 per annum. He and Mrs. Hines were said to have lived upstairs in the Cone home on Railroad Street.

The first minutes located in 1917 recorded the actions taken at a regular session held on July 7, 1917, when H.B. Hines was Moderator, Mr. Marshbourn, Clerk. A committee of John J. Proctor, C.B. Brantley, and Bob Ricks was appointed to be responsible for seeing that there was an adequate supply of coal and wood on hand at all times. Apparently the church had decided to buy a pulpit set, because a committee from the Ladies' Aid was to help buy it. The preacher's salary was discussed on June 2, 1918. A committee composed of Mr. Proctor, Mr. Willie Sutton, Mrs. Allen, Mrs. Ben Morgan, C.E. May, Mrs. Tant, and Mrs. Privette, was named to collect the pastor's salary from the members.

April 6, 1919, a committee of one was appointed to "look after" the sexton. Mr. Ben Morgan was named to do the job. Mr. M.H. Privette was appointed to "look after" the building. A committee of Mrs. Arthur Farmer, Mrs. Hines, Mrs. McLean, Mrs. Lizzie Brantley, and Mrs. Marshbourn, was named to buy the pulpit set. The committee appointed on July, 1917, had not done its work apparently.

On March 23, 1919, a pianist was elected. That was Miss Lula Hollingsworth. Her assistant, Miss Clyde McNair (piano teacher), was named. A director for music, Mrs. Ed Griffin, and an assistant director, Miss Annie Pierce were elected. Delegates to the union meeting held on fifth Sundays were elected as follows: S.R. Pierce, B.E. Morgan, and G.J. May. These union services were held on fifth Sundays. All the Baptist churches in the vicinity would meet together at a designated church for each fifth Sunday.

The single budget system of financing the church was adopted on April 13, 1919. By this system, the individual member would be allowed to decide

the method by which they would pay — weekly, monthly, or semi-annually. It was voted to revise the church roll.

Again, on May 4, 1919, the pulpit set purchase arose. It was voted that the money for the set be collected before buying. The town would be divided into four sections, from which four members of the Ladies' Aid would collect. Those appointed were Mrs. C.R. Speight, Mrs. Annie Griffin, Mrs. J.A. Marshbourn, and Mrs. J.A. Tunnell. At the May 25, 1919, conference, the committee on repair work was asked to report. They asked for more time. The nature of the repairs is not known.

After May 25, 1919, six leaves have been cut out of the minute book. The next minutes recorded are dated January 4, 1920. As for the work of the Reverend Hines, he was at Spring Hope during trying times. The war affected the economy. The young men were drafted into armed services. An epidemic of influenza was sweeping the community and the nation. Many people were struck down with severe cases of the "flu." It was contagious and tenacious. The war ended on November 11, 1918, when Armistice was signed. The effects of the war had not disappeared overnight, and the flu epidemic raged all during the winter of 1918-1919.

In spite of the obstacles of war and epidemic, Reverend Hines served his people well. As late as 1918, nine people had been excluded from the membership, one had died, but fourteen had been accepted by baptism and 33 by letter. He built up a membership of 201 during his tenure. He was very effective in his work here. In September, 1919, he resigned from his duties at the Spring Hope Church to accept a call to the Roanoke Island mission field which was partly supported by the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. His work there would begin in November. Carlton McGregor, Wake Forest College Bible student, served the rest of the calendar year. In January, 1920, John R. Carroll served as pastor for the entire year. The momentum of the church did not falter.

The Million Dollar campaign, which was a fund to collect monies from the churches in North Carolina, had begun throughout the state. This was a fund to benefit the Baptist educational institutions in the state and was conceived in 1917. The Ladies' Aid or Missionary Society raised most of Spring Hope's assessment. These funds were to be distributed as follows: \$300,000 to Wake Forest College, \$300,000 to Meredith College, \$120,000 to Chowan College, and \$20,000 to each of the fourteen Baptist high schools. By 1919 the Southern Baptist Convention set a goal of raising seventy-five million dollars in five years. Of this amount, \$20,000,000 would be used for Foreign Missions, \$12,000,000 for Home Missions, and \$11,000,000 for state missions. The remainder would be divided among hospitals, orphanages, and ministerial relief. North Carolina's part would be \$6,000,000. That would include the \$1,000,000 that North Carolina was

already raising for Christian education. Spring Hope pledged \$9,400.00 over a period of five years. R. L. Pitts was elected Treasurer of the 75 Million Dollar Campaign in the local church on January 4, 1920, when Rev. John R. Carroll moderated the church conference and J.E. McLean, Clerk, recorded the activity of the meeting. Carroll came as the regular pastor on January 1, 1920. Mrs. Carroll was Sunbeam leader while in Spring Hope. They stayed until the end of the year, 1920, at which time E.G. Stevens agreed to serve as interim pastor. In spite of the lack of a regular pastor, the work of the church continued. The membership gained ten. The church was not idle. A.C. Farmer became Sunday School Superintendent. The Deacons were empowered to name a Board of Trustees for the first time on March 20, 1920. They elected A.F. May, Genatus J. May, Ben Wood, J.A. Tunnell, and Dr. F.G. Chamblee.

Some of the members felt that a pastorium would facilitate securing a pastor. A committee was named during Rev. Carroll's pastorate in 1920 to investigate the cost. Those serving were A.F. May, B.E. Morgan, and M.H. Privette. A \$3,000.00 budget was adopted and on April 4, 1920, the finance committee was instructed to collect funds to build a parsonage, to secure at least \$3,000.00, and to borrow up to \$5,000.00. This committee included: B.E. Morgan, A.C. Farmer, M.H. Brantley, Mrs. J.A. Tunnell and H.L. Griffin. The Building Committee reported in March, 1920, that the plans for the pastorium had been chosen. The church voted unanimously to build a house for the preacher as soon as possible. By May the Committee had received the plans and ordered the bricks, subject to approval. The Finance Committee reported that it was waiting for an estimate of the cost before starting to canvass for funds. One wonders if they planned to build where the education building is today since they owned no other property.

By June, 1920, the church had voted to sell the pump organ to Peachtree Church and to give them the old communion plates. Mrs. A.F. May had elected to buy new plates and did so. A piano was used from 1920 to 1937 for worship services.

The minutes kept by J.E. McLean, Church Clerk, with Rev. Carroll, moderator, ended with the report of the meeting on June 20, 1920. By the end of the year, Carroll had resigned. E.G. Stevens became interim pastor. Enthusiasm seemed high among the members. Forty-seven members attended the May, 1920 conference. The pastor had been paid \$750.00 since November 30, 1919. Average Sunday School attendance, January - May, 1920, was 120. April was the high attendance month in which it reached 140 average.

The W.M.U. that year reported 38 members and had collected clothing for American orphans, made 287 general calls and 163 sick calls. They had given 75 garments to a frontier missionary.



A special church conference was called January 2, 1921, to approve calling E.G. Stevens to the pastorate at \$2,000.00 per year. The next conference recorded was July 9, 1922 with Rev. B.O. Myers, Pastor.

Building of the pastorium was delayed for some reason, but on November 11, 1922, the church voted unanimously to build a "PASTORIUM." The clerk was evidently so excited that the building seemed in sight that he printed the word in capital letters. No further reference had been located.

Reverend B.O. Myers accepted the pastorate for the Spring Hope Church on July, 1921. He and his wife brought their letters on July 22, 1921. They are said to have lived on Hopkins Avenue. He presided as Moderator at the July church conference. They are said to have had two children, Garnet and Wade. Mrs. H.H. Myers came to the membership about the same time. It is not known if she was Reverend Myers' mother. In October, 1922, J.J. Proctor was instructed to find out from the town board if "we can pave the sidewalk in front of the church." In November his report was positive and the work was done. Proctor was given the authority to have the sidewalk extended up to the steps of the church. Some sidewalks had been completed in the business area as early as 1914, but those in front of the First Baptist Church were not paved until late 1922. At the May 6, 1923, conference, the trustees were instructed to sign for paving the street in front of the church property.

Water and sewer systems were initiated in Spring Hope in 1919. On November 26, the town board minutes read: "Water and sewer systems have been completed according to the contract." On July 20, 1920, they read: "Motion made and carried to supply a hydrant at the Baptist Church corner." There is no available record to show when the church took action toward installing a baptistry. The hydrant had been placed at the corner as voted by the town board in 1920. The earliest record found names James Bunn and Fred Smith baptized on April 16, 1922, with Lizzie Taylor Beaman and J.D. Luper, Jr., on April 23, 1922.

That same year on June 4, twenty people were baptized. They were:

Mrs. L.T. Bartholomew  
Hattie Coppedge  
Enola Carmean  
Helen Carmean  
Lois Carmean  
Eula Debnam  
E.N. Eustler  
Eula Mae Green  
Josie Mae Green  
Wheeler Green

UNC-CH Library

Edith Griffin  
Mrs. J.H. Ivey  
Mrs. G.E. Markham  
Charley Morris  
James Morgan  
Rosa Mae Proctor  
Elsie Mae Weathersby  
Sallie Kate Wilkerson  
Nannie Williams

What a Sunday that must have been to have had so many baptisms! Rosa Mae Proctor Moon remembers being baptized in the first baptistry located under the floor behind the pulpit stand. The covering could be removed for baptismal rites and replaced after services so that it was not noticeable. Then, with the carpet over it, it could be walked upon safely. There were three steps inside the baptistry leading down into it. There were no changes in the arrangement until 1935. It seems strange that, while water was piped into the church, no plumbing for toilet facilities was installed. It was not until an education building was constructed in 1951 that water closets were available. The neighbors around the church must have been called upon frequently!

The pastorium was still an item that was uppermost in the minds of members. On January 7, 1923, A.C. Farmer was elected treasurer of a fund to be raised to pay for the building. No further reference is found until many years later.

The first known record of election of Sunday School officers and teachers took place at the church conference on July 1, 1923. They were:

Superintendent: E.M. Eustler  
Assistant Superintendent: B.E. Morgan  
Secretary-Treasurer: C.E. Jackson  
Assistant Secretary-Treasurer: J.J. Proctor

The teachers were:

Beginners: Mrs. J.A. Tunnell, Miss Bessie Strickland  
Primary I: Miss Annie Pierce  
Primary III: Miss Effie Pierce  
Juniors: Mrs. W.M. Harper  
Intermediate Boys I: Mrs. B.O. Myers  
Intermediate Girls I: Mrs. C.R. Speight  
Intermediate Boys II: Mrs. M.H. Privette  
Intermediate Girls II: Miss Loula Hollingsworth  
Senior Boys: Mrs. H.L. Griffin  
Senior Girls: Miss Thelma Lamm  
Berea Class: J.E. McLean

Fidelis Class: Mrs. G.C. Walker

Baraca Class: J.M. Sykes

Timothy, Eunice, and Lois Class: G.W. Bunn

Primary II was not listed.

Reverend Myers had been pastor since July 1, 1921. On October 14, 1923, he resigned the office, effective January 1, 1924. A pulpit committee was named on October 14 to secure a new pastor. On that committee were A.F. May, Dr. F.G. Chamblee, and S.R. Pierce. In December, 1923, Mr. Pierce resigned from the committee and Dr. J.R. Vann was designated to fill the vacancy.

During Myers' pastorate, membership had grown from 204 to 243. The Lord's Supper was being observed on a quarterly basis. Property was valued at \$15,000.00. Two members were excluded in 1923. J.E. McLean served as church clerk; and J.J. Proctor, Treasurer. Mrs. Gertie May was President of the Woman's Missionary Society, and Mrs. B.O. Myers led the Young Women's Auxiliary. Baptist Young People's Union was reported for the first time in 1922, with Thelma Lamb, Gene Bergeron, and Hattie Coppedge as leaders. Sixty-eight were enrolled in 1922 and in 1923 Dr. J.R. Vann was B.Y.P.U. leader. Sunday School Superintendent E.N. Eustler reported 217 students enrolled.

The work of the church had been vigorous under Rev. Myers' strong leadership. He was loved and respected. He seemed in turn to love and respect his people for wanting to see the church flourish. Much was accomplished to make the church more spiritual-minded and more physically comfortable and attractive.

The pulpit committee named in late 1923 had secured Reverend James Ambrose Ward, a young, single man of 29, who would begin his work at the Spring Hope Church in January, 1924. He roomed in the home of Dr. and Mrs. John R. Wheless on Nash Street. Rev. Ward came directly from a Baptist church in Stantonsburg. His work is well-remembered by those who were living here during his stay. He was dark, short, and handsome. The young ladies of the community swooned over him. He was very influential with the young people.

Cement steps were constructed at the two front entrances and at the rear south and the rear north. At some point in 1924 the church caught fire. Mr. Eugene Privette (brother of Mrs. George W. Marshbourne and living now in Newport News, Virginia) writes that he cannot recall the exact date of the damage. He lived in the county and was delivering milk in town early one Sunday morning when he heard the fire siren. He went to see where the fire was. It was in the basement of the First Baptist Church, having started from the over-heated furnace. He helped to put out the fire. Smoke damaged the sanctuary. Until repairs were made, services were held in the Episcopal

Church at 213 North Walnut Street. This church was removed some years later and M.V. Parrish built his home there.

Mr. Ward's first year, it seemed, did not get off to a good start. Not so. That year he baptized forty-seven, admitted nineteen by letter and three by statement, but thirteen were lost by exclusion and two by removal of letter. The total membership reported to the Association in 1924 had reached 296. J.E. McLean, church clerk, had resigned upon leaving his school post in Spring Hope. R.L. Pitts was named to replace McLean. Mr. Eustler was still Sunday School Superintendent and reported an enrollment of 287 students. Mrs. R.L. Pitts led B.Y.P.U. with forty-eight enrolled. The W.M.U. reported only G.A.'s with Mrs. I.T. Valentine, leader. Mr. Ward's salary that year was \$1,968.00.

For the first time in the Association report at conference in Washington, N.C., in 1925, the Spring Hope Church reported Mission Support in the amount of \$1,473.17. Ward's salary was less at \$1,830.00. Membership decreased to 257. There were many removals by letter, four deaths, and one exclusion. On the other hand, there were eighteen baptisms, fourteen admitted by letter and four by statement. The following year (1926) at Bethel, Spring Hope reported 215 members and in 1927 at Enfield, a total of 194. Calculations of gains and losses do not substantiate the totals. By 1929 the membership was reported at 181. Although no record can validate this so far, it is believed that over this period of time the church roll was being revised.

There was great mobility of the local population during this time. Hard times were rearing ugly heads. Tobacco companies, large lumber companies, and small enterprises were going out of business. Many people moved and failed to remove their names from the church roll or to take their letters of dismissal with them. In many instances the membership roll book during the Twenties had the letters N.R. beside many names. One assumes that would indicate "No Record."

However that may be, the church continued to open its doors for worship and the Lord's work. Mission support had reached \$1,565.05 in 1928 and the 1929 record states merely "Cooperative Program, \$324.01." Ward's salary had reached \$2,400.00 annually. Church property was valued at \$20,000.00.

The American people had witnessed a period of great prosperity since World War I. Now, 1929 marked the beginning of a severe depression. Economic conditions were growing increasingly worse. Unemployment increased; banks, businesses, and factories closed. Then came Black Friday. The stock market crashed and closed in October, 1929. People began to look in other places for any kind of job that would pay enough to sustain them. The cost of living was high, money was scarce, and everybody was poor.







## CHAPTER THREE

# The Cullom Years 1929-1941

The First Baptist Church, Spring Hope, in May of 1929, asked Dr. Willis R. Cullom, Dean of the Bible Department at Wake Forest College, to help in securing a supply pastor for the local church. He advised that Olin T. Binkley, a former student of Dr. Cullom, be contacted. He was a student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, and had just been ordained that month of May, 1929. Binkley agreed to serve the church only for the summer months until his return in September to fall classes at the seminary. For three months he served the Baptists and the community well, so that they were reluctant to part with him.

It was necessary for the pulpit committee to keep working. At last the church "voted to leave it with Dr. Cullom to supply for us until the church could secure a pastor." Dr. Cullom decided himself to fill the Spring Hope Baptist vacancy for a time. Since there was no pastorium, he reasoned that he could come from Wake Forest on the weekends to minister and return to Wake Forest on Sunday nights after services. This was a distance of little more than twenty-five miles. With that arrangement he could be in place for his duties at the college. There was one drawback — Dr. Cullom did not drive a car. From time to time, he would locate a student who, leaving for the weekend, was driving in the direction of Spring Hope to return on Sunday night to Wake Forest. Dr. Cullom "hitched" rides with these weekenders frequently. Sometimes, one of the deacons would go for him and take him back. At other times, for six years, H.M. Hocutt, a Bible student, chauffeured him wherever he wanted to go. A few times, Mr. Hocutt led the singing at annual revival services in the local church.

Dr. Cullom was, as stated before, a commuter pastor. He was invited by many of the members from time to time to spend Saturday night in their homes. Periodically, he stayed in the homes of Mr. and Mrs. M.H. Privette, Mr. and Mrs. J.A. Tunnell, and Mrs. Lizzie Brantley. During the last years

of his pastorate here, he had a room called “Dr. Cullom’s Room” in the home of Mr. and Mrs. F.D. Bissett. One member recalls having him in her home a few times. Her small children were amazed to see that he wore a nightcap. He was bald! They had seen pictures in storybooks of characters wearing nightcaps, but they never believed that anyone in real life wore them. Most Sundays, Dr. Cullom was invited to eat the midday meal with a member family. When he was not asked to share a meal with friends, he would go to Mrs. W.O. Saunders’ boarding house. He knew she served wonderful meals and that he would get to see some people whom he might not otherwise see.

Being of average weight and height in 1930 (he was 63 at the time), Dr. Cullom was disproportionately large around the middle. A friend who was in Law School at Wake Forest College in 1933 related that Dr. Cullom was affectionately called “Potty” Cullom on that campus.

All who knew him — child, student, layman, or learned philosopher — grew to love Dr. Cullom for his enduring, endearing qualities. He was gentle, patient, kind, understanding, and supportive in all Christian service. He was, on the other hand, outspoken against any actions that were not in keeping with the tenets of Christian ethics. He could “pour oil on troubled waters” in the calmest manner imaginable. He could raise his voice in a thunderous manner in protest of unethical attitudes and behavior. He believed in a liberal interpretation of what a Christian is, but he had no patience with any action, social or political, that he felt was in opposition to Christian treatment of human rights and humanity itself.

Spring Hope had in Dr. Cullom a paragon of virtue who had agreed to serve the Baptist church under limited conditions. Sometimes he had to meet engagements involving the college which conflicted with his coming to the church here. In those instances, he always made arrangements for the pulpit to be filled in his absence.

A pastorium was no longer a pressing need. Besides, the economy was sliding downward. When the stock market crashed in October, 1929, panic set in all over the country. People began to withdraw their deposits and savings from banks. In turn, all banks closed their doors. Economic depression was certain. Money was held *very* tightly. Rationing of foodstuffs and gasoline was imposed on the American people. Everybody was “poor” but realized that all were “poor.” The economic pitch was no respecter of persons nor of communities. Spring Hope suffered, too. Conditions did not begin to improve until President Roosevelt took steps to ease the woes of the nation. He adopted emergency measures to meet the economic crisis. Unemployment was at a high percentage. Every bank in the country was closed on March 4, 1933. The President declared a “Bank Holiday.” Sound banks reopened in ten days. Others received help by bank



conservators, while others paid a small percentage of funds deposited and never reopened.

It is not surprising to note that contributions to the church decreased. In 1929 Cooperative Program gifts from First Baptist Church dropped from \$1,000.00 to \$324.01. Membership had dropped, also. Many people had moved because of unemployment to seek jobs elsewhere. Wages were drastically reduced. People were having a hard go of it, but Dr. Cullom was faithful. He was in Spring Hope every Saturday and Sunday visiting every home on each side of a street. When he returned the next weekend, he would begin his visits at the house where he stopped last time. He took time to call at every home, regardless of denomination or non-affiliation.

At the Roanoke Association meeting on October 14, 15, 1930, Spring Hope Church Clerk R.L. Pitts reported:

W.R. Cullom, pastor; salary, \$1,275.00 per annum

preaching: every Sunday

members, 222

Sunday School Superintendent: Theo Easom

S.S. enrollment: 239

Cooperative Program: \$426.76

The Church voted on May 5, 1930, to hold Daily Vacation Bible School and to have a church revival from Sunday, May 25, through June 8. Dr. Cullom led all the services. Rev. Olin T. Binkley, former interim pastor, assisted, and H.M. Hocutt, Dr. Cullom's driver friend, assisted in the revival singing. Approximately thirty people were added by baptism, twelve by letter, and one by statement. All the baptismal services during the meeting were held at night with Rev. Binkley doing the baptizing.

In 1932 Dr. Cullom's salary had dropped to \$842.12. The church gave \$295.92 to the Cooperative Program, but membership reached 234. Sunday School enrollment numbered 265. Members had little money, but they were desperately seeking answers to how they might lead a more productive life. Spiritual lives became more important than material benefits. Dr. Cullom had come for such a time as this. He was just what the congregation needed to bring spiritual strength to a sagging hope.

Two church bulletins printed in 1931 were contributed by Annie Britton Bartholomew Baskett of Raleigh. These were evidently printed in Wake Forest. The fronts and backs of each have short items taken from various religious publications. Inside there are orders of services and items of interest to the church. One bulletin is dated May 31, 1931, and some of the items are noted as follows:

*Give attention to the children.* These sentences speak for themselves. The ancient people of God have come to modern times as a people because they paid attention to their children.

The Roman Catholic Church flourishes for the same reason. Soviet Russia, if it wins, will win because of the attention given to the children.

The three sections of the *B.Y.P.U.* will meet to-gether at 7:00 o'clock this evening and be led by Prof. A.E. Lynch who is leading our singing for us in the revival services which are in progress.

Dr. Cullom always had a touch of wit. Included in this bulletin is this story: "The Wufus bird is said to fly backwards! It seems to be more interested in where it has come from than in where it is going. Did you ever see any people like that?"

### **Order of Services, May 31, 1931**

Sunday School: 9:45 A.M.	B.Y.P.U.: 7:00 P.M.
Morning Service: 11:00 A.M.	Evening Service: 8:00 P.M.
Piano prelude	Hymn
Doxology and Invocation	Prayer
Responsive Reading	Hymn
Hymn	Scripture Reading
Scripture Reading	Announcements
Prayer	Offertory
Hymn	Sermon
Announcements	Hymn
Offertory	Silent Moment
Sermon	
Hymn	
Silent Moment	

The revival services ran for two weeks again in 1931. It is believed that Dr. Cullom conducted the meetings.

The bulletin for September 20, 1931 follows the same format. Notes of interest include:

Our church and its pastor take great pleasure in welcoming to our service *Mr. Burt Johnson* and his *splendid team*. We are wishing for them the most successful year in the history of the school.

The election of officers last Sunday night for the next year in our church resulted as follows: *Deacons*: Genatus May, Ben Morgan, P.C. Newton; *Trustee*, J.J. Pitts; *Treasurer*, J.J. Proctor; *Clerk*, R.L. Pitts; *Director of the Choir*, Mrs. O.G. Edwards; *Supt. of Sunday School*, L.T. Bartholomew; *Associate Supts.*, G.C. Lassiter, Mrs. R.L. Pitts; *Secretary*, V.B.

Weaver; *Associate Secretary*, Garland Morgan; *Treasurer*, J.J. Proctor; *Chorister*, Theo Easom; *Supt. Home Department*, Mrs. Genatus May; *Supt. Cradle Roll*, Mrs. Arthur Morgan.

The *opening of school* on Sept. 12 was quite a notable occasion. It looks as if it might be necessary to tear down and build greater in the future.

It is a pleasure to note how beautifully our people have fallen in with the "*quiet moment*" at the close of each service. Sometimes the pastor has a feeling that if something could be done to produce a feeling of quietness and of prayerful approach at the opening of the service it would help. What think you?

It was a beautiful service beautifully rendered when *Judge Moss' class* served cream and cake to the congregation following the lecture on the evening of Sept. 9.

The report of *Treasurer Proctor* on last Sunday evening should constitute a real challenge to the membership and friends of our church. It is a time when every one "*should put his shoulder to the wheel.*"

These items are jewels, indicative of the gracious spirit of Dr. Cullom. Memory recalls that he always placed an appropriate quote, poem, or humorous story in the bulletin.

From an old Treasurer's record, it was found that in January, 1933, the church was banking with Peoples Bank and Trust Company. The General Fund amounted to \$59.85 on January 1, 1933, and the Special Fund was \$85.03. J.J. Proctor was the Treasurer. Dr. Cullom's salary was \$100.00 per month. The Church Treasurer was paid \$7.50 per month, the Church Secretary, Thelma Collie, was paid \$5.00 per month. The January light bill was \$6.53. The Church Janitor, "Uncle" Major Spivey, was paid \$7.50 every other month. Mrs. W.O. Saunders was paid \$7.50 per month for Dr. Cullom's board, Rev. Fred N. Day was paid \$43.19 for conducting a two weeks revival. Miss Virginia Baines directed Vacation Bible School.

The economic crisis which followed the Depression was reflected in the banking systems. The Peoples Bank and Trust Company closed in early September, 1933. A temporary banking service was offered on September 19, 1933, by the Spring Hope Depository. The Church deposited \$119.10 there in September and wrote checks amounting to \$105.37. The September light bill came to \$3.50. That was the first light bill paid by check under the new banking policy, paid September 30, 1933, to Carolina Power and Light Company.

The life of Spring Hope Depository was short. The last deposit First

Baptist made to that system is dated November 15, 1934, in the amount of \$29.00. The first deposit with the new First Citizens Bank and Trust Company was made November 24, 1934, in the amount of \$31.51. This bank continues to serve Spring Hope today.

One of the favorite things of Dr. Cullom's life was reading. He often recommended a book or an article he had just read. It was his habit to read late into the night, but he was out of bed early in the mornings to read again. He liked to write and did write many, many articles for the Baptist publications, *Charity and Children* and *The Biblical Recorder*. These articles were usually concerning issues before the Baptists: social issues, theological treatises, and sometimes memoirs.

The church membership was growing. The first step toward enlargement was a deposit of \$2.04 in a Building Fund dated May 28, 1934. That fund grew to \$23.14 by the end of November. The record of a Building Fund was not found after September, 1935. It was \$34.14 at that time. More room had been needed for some time. Sunday School Superintendent, M.E. Edwards, reported a student enrollment of 288. Three classes met in the sanctuary, two in the two small rooms at the rear of the church, three classes in the three balcony rooms, one in the belfry and a boys' class taught by Mr. Bud Sykes at the top of the stairs. The rooms to the sides and rear of the pulpit were used to capacity.

The opportunity to purchase the T.C. May building on Railroad Street arose. The May Co. had gone out of business in the mid-20's. Two chemical companies owned the property. The Trustees were empowered to investigate. The property could not be conveyed. One of the principal stockholders had not signed a previous transfer of ownership. On April 22, 1935, Cornelia Goodward of Bronx, New York, signed a quitclaim for her right to ownership and conveyed her 62.57% interest in and to the land, 1/2 lots 6 and 8 and all of lot 7 in the town of Spring Hope, three store lots and buildings thereon to Spring Hope Baptist Church. This deed was registered in Nash County, N.C., on May 2, 1935, in Deed Book 389, page 441. Then on May 8, 1935, Southern Cotton Oil Company, a New Jersey Corporation, sold to Spring Hope Baptist Church for the sum of \$5.00 its 37.43% interest in the same tract, it being tract 1 in a deed from T.C. May Co. to A.F. May, situated on Railroad Street. The deed was signed by C.J. Jordan, Vice-President, the Southern Cotton Oil Company, and is registered in Nash County Deed Book 389, page 513, dated June 13, 1935.

The T.C. May Building on Railroad Street was soon "fixed up" for the use of the church. The women members worked hard to make it suitable for meetings. Much work had to be done. They scrubbed, rearranged and made the space attractive after the men made the repairs. The ladies had already improved the sanctuary. They made the money to



buy and hang the beautiful burgundy red velvet drapes that hung from the ceiling to the floor behind the choir loft. These were trimmed with gold-braid and fringe. They had also put brass rails and rings with short matching drapes just in front of the choir. This softened the corner that the choir occupied. In 1936 Mr. P.E. Daniel, as a memorial to his loving late wife, Ethel Derby Daniel, had handsome walnut paneling placed around the baptistry behind the pulpit stand and under the floor. An appropriate brass plaque was attached. To further equip the annex the church bought an oil stove for cooking and tables for eating. The Adult Men's Class taught by Mr. O.B. Moss and Dr. F.G. Chamblee met there on Sunday mornings. The Missionary Society and the young organizations held their meetings there.

With Dr. Cullom's influence, the church voted in the Spring of 1936 to place women on the Board of Deacons for the first time. One of the three ladies named to that Board was Mrs. P.N. Collie. The other two are said to have been Mrs. A.F. May and Mrs. O.B. Baines. R. L. Pitts, Church Clerk, reported to the Roanoke Association on October 13, 1936, that there were 245 members of the church; 290 in Sunday School, T.H. LeCroy, Superintendent; Daily Vacation Bible School, 75; President of W.M.U., Mrs. A.F. May, 100 members; Cooperative Program Gift, \$300.00; property value \$23,000.00 and pastor's annual salary, \$912.88.

Dancing became an issue among North Carolina Baptists in 1936, especially on the Baptist College Campuses. Dr. Cullom took the stand that young people are going to dance. Dancing, to him, was not the issue. The questions were: where they danced, whether they were supervised, and whether a curfew would be enforced. He felt it would be better to hold the dances on campus with acceptable and responsible chaperones present. Dr. Cullom believed that the greater problem was in fostering a deeper spiritual life among Baptist people and that dancing was a minor problem.

The Lions Club was organized in the Spring Hope community in 1937. The ladies of the church saw an opportunity to make money for their projects by serving the Lions' suppers! It was a supper club that met twice a month. The Annex was comfortably arranged and the ladies were energetic and able to raise money for missions, for improving the appearance of the church and the Annex. Good work was done by all members, especially the women.

The piano purchased in 1920 was still being used for worship services. The members felt that the dignity of those services would be enhanced by an organ. Dr. Cullom was heartily in favor of such a step. It was voted to have a demonstration of a proper organ in the sanctuary. Dr. Cullom invited his son, Edward, who was a representative of Stephenson Music Company in Raleigh, to come on December 9, 1937, with an organ

for demonstration. The cost of the organ would be about \$1,000.00. At that meeting the first amount pledged was by B.E. Morgan. Other members followed his lead and enough was pledged that night to pay for the organ and its installation. The bill was paid by January 1, 1938. O.B. Baines Hardware wired the choir loft to accommodate the organ.

The music program was always important to the church. At this point in time, 1937, Mrs. G.C. Lassiter had been pianist since the early 1930's. She was a music graduate from North Carolina College for Women at Greensboro, (now U.N.C.G.) She taught private piano lessons in the Spring Hope Public Schools. At times she both played and directed the choir. Choir members during the Cullom years included: Mrs. Clyde McNair Pitts, Mrs. B.G. Morgan, Miss Corinne Pridgeon, Mrs. Opie Edwards, Mrs. Rica Griffin, Mrs. Lucille Hales Gay, Mrs. M.V. Parrish, Mrs. G.W. Bunn, Jr., Mrs. Arthur Morgan, Miss Ida Privette, Miss Louise Strickland, Dr. F.G. Chamblee, Arthur Morgan, C.J. Joyner and Theo Easom.

Special music programs were given each December at a late Sunday afternoon service with refreshments later for all in attendance. Most often the presentation was a Christmas Cantata. Dr. Cullom felt the choir should be entertained in the Annex Building with a "cup of tea."

During 1937 Dr. Cullom has several "blows." He learned that Wake Forest College Board of Trustees had voted to retire all members of the faculty who were seventy years old or more. He was born in 1867 and was one of the six affected by the ruling. A retiring allowance of \$1200.00 per annum would be provided. Dr. James Blackmore, in his biography of Dr. Cullom, *The Cullom Lantern*, states that Dr. Cullom's salary at the college was never more than \$3300.00 a year. What a great man he was to receive so little compensation! Naturally, Cullom protested the ruling as arbitrary and thoughtless. He was crushed for he felt his value to the college was greater than it had ever been. He had played an outstanding part in promoting Wake Forest College in its development.

Add to that the fact that Mrs. Cullom's health was failing. She needed closer care. His eyesight was growing dim, yet he continued to teach as faithfully as ever. He was retired from active service to the college at the end of the academic year on May 25, 1938. Dr. Olin T. Binkley was elected to fill Dr. Cullom's office as head of the Wake Forest School of Religion.

Dr. Cullom led the revival services in the summer of 1938 and stated that it was one of his best revivals. The membership then numbered 286. The pastor's salary was increased to \$1,200.00. During the Depression, his members had had very little money to pay their pastor adequately, but Dr. Cullom never complained. Mrs. L.T. Bartholomew was the new Church

Clerk, Treasurer M.E. Edwards reported \$400.00 paid to the Cooperative Program and church property was valued at \$25,000.00 with \$15,000.00 insurance.

From time to time Dr. Cullom brought other outstanding Christian leaders to speak to his congregation. Among them were: Dr. Benjamin Sledd, Professor A.E. Lynch, Dr. J.W. Lynch, Dr. Claude Kitchin, all from Wake Forest College. He brought many other learned speakers and missionaries. One of the memorable missionary couples was Mr. and Mrs. C.K. Djang, Chinese, who spoke of their work in China and made a very favorable impression upon the congregation.

Dr. Cullom was proud of his Spring Hope people and wanted to share with them his learned friends. Spring Hope, in turn, wanted to share with him their homes, food and time. He was often teased by his wife about going to "heaven." She said going to Spring Hope to him was like going to heaven. Locally he was teased about his "women" in the church. He had a habit of embracing the ladies when he came to town. He was teased about loving the ladies more than he did the men of his church. When he came to Spring Hope, it was his custom to use the telephone to call the ladies and to ask about their families and their health. Often he would let them know he wanted to go visiting and that he needed someone to take him. His vision was growing dimmer all the time, and he needed accompaniment. Dr. Cullom also thoroughly enjoyed suppers and he knew who prepared those suppers—the ladies—and who made the best apple pie or the best biscuits, etc. What suppers they were! He would suggest suppers to celebrate every kind of work in the church. There were suppers for the officers and teachers of the Sunday School, suppers for the choir members, suppers for the deacons, suppers for the public school graduating class, and others. When there were revivals, he and the guest speaker and singer were invited out for every lunch and dinner. These were arranged by the Women's Missionary Society so that, by the time the revival began, every hostess knew which day and meal she would have them in her home. It is unlikely that many homes were missed. How he did like to eat! Dr. Cullom somehow managed to have what he termed "a cup of tea" at every board or committee meeting.

Even the children loved Dr. Cullom and tried to emulate him. Charles Cree Hunter, when he was a small boy, saw Dr. Cullom coming up the street one Sunday afternoon and called to his grandmother, "Here comes Dr. Cullom. I'm going to be a preacher just like him when I grow up." It was the summer of 1940 that Mrs. B.G. Morgan, living on Railroad Street, saw her five-year-old son, John, standing on top of the chicken coop with a Bible in his hand and making all kinds of movements with his free arm. Of course, he could not read. His mother asked, "What on earth are you doing



up there?" His answer was, "I'm preaching like Dr. Cullom." There are probably other instances when children thought the preacher was perfect and wanted to be like him. Somehow he always seemed like a member of the family no matter what time he came and no matter what anyone was doing. He asked nothing more than to love and to be loved by his people.

The dear man came to Spring Hope for funerals, for weddings, to see new babies, to visit the sick and homebound, whether any of these were members of the Baptist church or not. He expressed his generosity, compassion, patience, and love in the dealings he had with others under all circumstances. He witnessed through caring and doing. It is small wonder that those who remember him revere him as a Godsend to this church and community when times were tough. By 1939 the church reported 293 members; by 1940, 312; and by 1944, his last year as Spring Hope's pastor, the membership had reached 324. Superintendent Earl Cummings reported 359 enrolled in Sunday School in 1941 and Mrs. M.H. Privette reported 120 W.M.U. members.

1939 was the 50th anniversary of First Baptist Church. On the front page of *The Nash County News*, volume 10, number 29, May 11, 1929, there was a picture of the church and a picture of Dr. Cullom. The paper stated, "The Golden Anniversary of the First Baptist Church finds its doors open in Union Revival." The Gibson Memorial Methodist Church, George W. Blount, pastor, held joint revival services on May 7-14, with the Baptists for the first time in their histories. A picture of Gibson Memorial and Rev. Blount was also on the front page. It stated, "The first building, a large one-room structure, was built in 1889-1890 by individual contribution, the first five dollars for paint reported to have been donated by W.G. Taylor, and used for both church and schoolhouse for several years. It served for all denominations except Universities." That is believed to be Universalists who held their services in vacant stores. Traveling ministers were welcome. Mr. W.G. Taylor was a Methodist. It is believed that the first building was essentially a school and used for church and Sunday School when needed. Those contributing to the newspaper article were: Mrs. George W. Bunn, Mrs. M.H. Privette, Dr. W.R. Cullom, George W. Bunn, Mrs. O.G. Edwards, and Mrs. Albert May.

(List of Sunday School Members in 1939, the 50th anniversary, Appendix B.)

The summer of 1939 the wood/coal furnace was converted to oil. Mrs. Lassiter took a leave of absence from her duties as organist from October, 1939, through September, 1940. Miss Betsy Morris, local student, served as interim organist. The bulletins for worship service had been being run off on the mimeograph at Wake Forest College at a cost of \$5.00 per month. The following year, 1940, Mr. M.V. Parrish, Superintendent of

Public Schools had them reproduced at the school. Later the church purchased a used mimeograph from the school. At Christmas, 1939, Mrs. R.T. Geddie was in charge of decorating the sanctuary and the Christmas tree.

Mrs. Cullom, already handicapped since 1937, suffered a fall in August, 1939. She broke no bones but was left in a weakened condition and was confined to her bed until her death in March, 1944. Dr. Cullom tendered his resignation as pastor in September, 1939. There was much discussion among the members. Some felt he was too old while others felt that the church needed a change. The majority felt that he had been and was a good Christian who had influenced so many lives for good that they could not vote against him. The church did not accept his resignation.

War clouds began to shadow the United States. Nationalism was expanding in Europe and the Far East. Dictatorships were developing in Germany, Italy, Russia, and Japan. The United States declared and passed stringent neutrality acts during the 1935-1937 period as an attempt to remain neutral. There was Japanese aggression in China; Italy had conquered Ethiopia in Africa; Germany had rearmed and had, under Adolf Hitler's leadership, taken over the Saar Basin and the Rhineland; Spain was in a civil war, but it added its strength to Italy's and Germany's. The United States continued to try to stay neutral, but foreign events caused the United States to enter World War II in December of 1941. Germany allied militarily with Italy, Japan, and Russia. Germany had occupied Austria and had taken over Czechoslovakia and Poland. England and France declared war on Germany in September of 1939. Hitler and his highly-mechanized German army overran Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France. England was now fighting the war alone. Italy, Russia, and Japan began to invade more and more small countries and possessions.

The United States' relations with Japan were strained over economic restrictions. By 1939 the United States began to prepare itself for war. The Selective Service Act of 1940 drafted men into military service. The industrial resources were mobilized, new naval and air bases were set up, aliens were required to register, and the Embargo Act was modified. On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked the U.S. Naval Base at Pearl Harbor in the Hawaiian Islands. Congress declared war the next day. It was not until after the American bombers dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima (August 5, 1945) and the second on Nagasaki (August 8, 1945) that war ceased. Both cities were totally destroyed. Japan surrendered unconditionally on September 2, 1945. The end of the European War allowed the military and political strength to be relocated. The dropping of the atomic bombs as well as Russia's declaration of war against Japan ended the

Pacific War. The United Nations Charter was adopted by 46 countries in 1945, with the U.N. Building established as permanent headquarters in New York City.

As early as 1939, Dr. Cullom felt that the crisis in Europe was a shadow over the whole world. He began to stress to the congregation more than ever the need to continue to grow in spirit and to increase faith in continuing prayer. He had written an article in April, 1937, for *The Biblical Recorder*. Following is an excerpt from the article:

The world's intellectual and mechanical developments have outstripped that of its moral; if we think of the awakening of the Far East as its vast hordes of people begin to seize and apply the marvels of physical science to industry, to education, to war ... it may well prove to be the Armageddon for this age, surely the importance of putting the Christian Spirit and motive into the various ... situation assumes proportions that might stagger all of us.

Dr. Cullom frequently spoke of Hitler's coming to power. He was truly troubled about the situation and seemed almost prophetic in speaking of it. He felt that Christ was more than adequately abundant for whatever the future might hold. He was more troubled about the growing apathy among the church people, their putting other things ahead of their duties at church, omitting prayers, and not noticing the subtle changes taking place in their homes, their hearts, their churches, and communities. Were people taking God for granted? He was very vehement about such a situation and never failed with kindly rebuke to call it to the attention of the offender and impersonally to the church.

The Selective Service Act of 1940 was taking many young men from the church and the community for military training. Dr. Cullom continued his inspiring sermons, his frequent pop-calls and his fondness for food. In his sermons he stressed that the Christian must hold fast to his faith. He must not be afraid of reality, he must seek it and face it with patience. Then he must apply that faith practically to the needs of the world one lives in.

Dr. Cullom felt that all people, and certainly Christians, should be more tolerant of those who differ in interpretation of the Bible. He stated in *The Biblical Recorder*, August 6, 1941, that "We need to take it for what it means to say, use it accordingly and pass on ... The real truth lying back of the figures of speech is infinitely more awful or glorious than any such figures could possibly be if one took them literally." He went on to add, "It is more important that people should go back of the form and the letter to the underlying spirit and purpose of God in such form and letter." — *The Cullom Lantern*, p. 240, Blackmore.

Goals were set for the church to reach. There were those who felt they were doing all they could do. Others felt that the church needed a resident pastor. Dr. Cullom had resigned again in 1940, but it was not until 1941, that the members were willing to accept his resignation. In September, First Baptist had taken out retirement insurance for him with the Relief and Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. Dr. Cullom would receive from that source \$30.00 a month for the remainder of his life. Providence kept Dr. Cullom with the Spring Hope Church through the winter of 1941-42. The Pulpit Committee had not been able to secure a pastor. Dr. Cullom agreed to serve until one could be found. By June, 1941, Rev. A. Lincoln Faulk, had accepted the pastorate and Dr. Cullom began his retirement in earnest. He had served long and well. He continued to love the people, the church, and the community and came at every opportunity. Sometimes he would preach a supply sermon, conduct special services, conduct funerals or weddings, but always was present for the celebration of his birthday. A cataract was removed from his left eye in April, 1943. He had pneumonia a couple of times, but with his indomitable Christian spirit, he continued to serve wherever he was needed. As late as July 3, 1949, Dr. Cullom gave the charge to Gerald Weaver at his ordination service at Rolesville Baptist Church. Gerald was brought up in the Spring Hope Church and was dedicating his life and service to the missionary effort in Africa. At the age of 92, Dr. Cullom was still writing for *The Biblical Recorder* and was still active. He attended his 95th birthday supper at the Spring Hope Church. He was feeble, but happy. His health declined from that time forward.

Although Dr. Cullom had been retired by the College in 1938, he was far from retired. He continued to be very active. On September 26, 1948, he came to Spring Hope Church to dedicate Donnie and Elaine Hawkins to the Lord in the sanctuary. They were the children of Rev. Harold L. Hawkins and his wife, Margaret. The North Roanoke Baptist Association was renamed the W.R. Cullom Association in his honor in October, 1958. His final visits to Spring Hope were during 1963. He came to his 96th birthday supper on January 15. It was obvious that he was childish and weak. By June he was in the hospital for a week with the hope of being strengthened. The week ran on until September 1, 1963, when he needed nursing home care. His son, Edward, had him removed from Wake Forest Hospital to the Wake Forest Rest Home. There Dr. Cullom seemed satisfied, yet life was slowly ebbing away. By mid-October he slipped into a coma and on Sunday, October 20, 1963, at 3:30 A.M., he was in the land of the blessed.

Spring Hope had had an angel in its midst. That dear servant of God was sorely grieved for and missed. He renewed the spiritual life of First

Baptist Church and the community at large. He was truly a man of God, a man in this world, but not of this world. He was a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path.

The source of the following poem is unknown. It was one of Dr. Cullom's favorites which he had printed and gave to his members at some point in his ministry:

*One step I see before me  
'Tis all I need to see.  
The light of heaven more brightly shines  
When earth's illusions flee;  
And sweetly through the silence came  
His loving 'Follow me'.  
So on I go, not knowing,  
I would not if I might,  
I'd rather walk in the dark with God  
Than go alone in the light.  
I'd rather walk by faith with him  
Than go alone by sight.*



## CHAPTER FOUR

# Enlargement of Facilities 1942-1961

When Dr. Cullom retired as pastor in September, 1941, it was a test for the First Baptist Church to stand and persevere. The next step was to secure a pastor. The pulpit committee, unknown, worked all the following winter to find a suitable replacement. Dr. Cullom's shoes were hard to fill and perhaps the membership was a little spoiled. One of the early realizations was that the church had no parsonage to offer a full time minister and that a higher salary would have to be offered.

The membership of the church had reached 324. The annual pastor's salary was \$1,200.00. R.E. Cummings, Sunday School Superintendent, reported an enrollment of 354 students. Mrs. L.T. Bartholomew, Baptist Training Union Director, stated that there were fifty members in that organization. Mrs. Bartholomew was also Church Clerk. M. Elmo Edwards was Church Treasurer who reported the value of church property at \$25,000.00 with insurance valued at \$15,000.00. With some adjustments in the budget, the pulpit committee was given more latitude in seeking a replacement.

### A. Lincoln Faulk, 1942-1943

On February 28, 1942, the pulpit committee brought Reverend A. Lincoln Faulk, pastor for nine and a half years at North Main Street Baptist Church, High Point, N.C., for a trial sermon. He was subsequently called to be the pastor and began his work in Spring Hope in June, 1942, at a salary of \$1,500.00 annually.

Rev. Faulk had a family. That circumstance would require a place to live. The committee found the Gaskins House at 309 Hopkins Avenue. With his wife, Buna, and their three children, Mamie, Harlan, and Evelyn, he moved into the house on Hopkins Avenue. The house was ill arranged.

The condition and age of the house made Rev. Faulk keenly aware of the need for an up-to-date parsonage. He initiated the move for the church to acquire a home of its own for the minister and his family. He led the church to establish a building fund to buy a lot and to plan eventually to build a parsonage on that lot. It was not until after he had assumed another pastorate in October, 1943, that the church bought a lot on Nash Street. The times dictated that the possibility of growth would be limited.

The Faulks did not complain. Some of the time Rev. Faulk's mother, Mrs. Lucy A. Faulk, lived with them. The pastor took courses at Wake Forest College during the week, led services on Sunday mornings and Sunday evenings and initiated Wednesday night prayer services. He never neglected his pastoral duties. He was very energetic and gave his total abilities to the needs of the church. Buna was not very active in the extracurricular functions of the church. She had three children and a husband to care for. These were the times before wash and wear clothes and it can be said truly that the family was a washed, starched, and ironed family. Rev. Faulk always looked as though he had just been freshly scrubbed and pressed.

In the fall of 1942, October 13, the Spring Hope Church hosted the Roanoke Association annual Conference. Rev. Faulk and his officers and teachers with the help of the ladies of the Missionary Society made the facilities of the church attractive. They served a good meal at the Annex. During the winter he led the church to buy a film projector which was used often as a teaching aid or a program aid in Christian work. The church also bought a flag and stars for the members who were serving their country. The flag had a star with each active service man's name on it. War had been declared December 7, 1941. It was on April 11, 1943, at the Sunday evening service, that a patriotic tribute was paid to those who were at that particular time in the Armed Services. A church bulletin entitled "In Honor of Those Who Are Absent" for that date gives the following information:

The flags were presented. Local Boy Scouts led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mrs. L.T. Bartholomew called the roll of the men absent in service as follows:

Lt. T.E. Blount  
T. Sgt. Derby Daniel  
A/c/c. Opie Edwards  
Sgt. Norwood Jackson  
Cpl. Genatus May, Jr.  
A/S. Cecil Manning  
Pfc. Quinton Brantley  
Cpl. Joseph Privette

F. 3/c Warren Brantley  
Lt. William C. Delbridge  
Lt. William Edwards  
Cpl. Charles Jackson  
Cpl. Percy May  
Cadet R.O. Mullen  
T.Sgt. Victor Pearson  
G.M. 2/c Bruce W. Sykes



Lt. William W. Speight  
Cpl. Norman Williams  
Sgt. Randolph Wheless  
Lt. Lee Wheless  
Cpl. John R. Wheless

Lt. Georgy Bunn Taylor  
Pfc. David Wood  
Cpl. Arthur W. Wheless  
Pvt. Braxton Wilder  
A/S Gerald Weaver

Mrs. Lucy A. Faulk led the prayer for parents of those absent. Rev. Faulk's sermon was based on "Why These Are Absent." It was a most impressive occasion.

The flag is in safekeeping at the church. Each star has a serviceman's name on it. There is now one gold star for Aircorpsman Opie Gray Edwards who was shot down and killed over Hungary one year later in 1944.

The church life had to go on in spite of the war. Choir practices were held on Wednesday nights and Baptist Training Union was held in the Annex on Railroad Street. Tithes and offerings were showing a gradual decrease. The economic stress of war was felt. For the quarter ending on March 31, 1943, contributions amounted to only \$1,264.19. On any Sunday collections were little more than \$100.00, yet somehow Rev. Faulk was able to inspire his flock to build up an interest in establishing a church-owned pastorium.

The annual revival was held in May, 1943. Rev. W.M. Hutchins was the revival preacher and C.J. Davis led the singing. Miss Betty Moore directed the Bible School in June. The Sunday bulletins were printed by mimeograph. The covers were purchased from the Baptist Bulletin Service. The church gained nine members while Rev. Faulk was pastor.

He was impressed with the love and care of the Spring Hope members. In his own words he said later,

I found no place where the love and care were greater. My pastorate there was all too short, but it was a happy one and gave me new outlooks and visions after a long and grueling pastorate at High Point.

Faulk was a very astute man, small in stature, keen-witted, jolly, ambitious, and willing to work. His efforts were far reaching. Although he and his family fared well in Spring Hope, Rev. Faulk was offered a greater opportunity for service at First Baptist in Washington, N.C. He tendered his resignation to the Spring Hope Church in July, 1943, effective September 30, 1943. The members were sorry to see him go. He had led them in a surge of interest following their experience with a commuter pastor. When the Faulk family moved in September, the church presented Rev. Faulk a handsome gold watch in appreciation for his efforts during the year and four months of his pastorate.

The Pulpit Committee, whose names were not found, began its work in July, 1943. They gathered the church statistics. Membership stood at 333. Sunday School enrollment, 228, and Training Union under the direction of Rex Stevens had forty-seven members. Mrs. M.H. Privette reported 120 W.M.U. members. The Treasurer, Elmo Edwards, reported \$1,038.11 given to missions, \$416.00 to the Cooperative Program, and the pastor's salary was reported at \$2,287.50 annually.

### **Millard M. Johnson, 1943-1947**

Rev. Millard M. Johnson accepted the call to First Baptist Church in Spring Hope beginning on October 1, 1943. He had served at Bethel Baptist Church, Bethel, N.C., for the previous seven years. His base salary was set at \$2,287.50. He and his wife, Katie, and small daughter, Kay, moved into the Gaskins house on Hopkins Avenue. It truly was not a satisfactory house, but the Johnsons did not complain. They made friends easily. Both were outgoing, amiable, and jolly. Johnson appreciated good humor and action. Katie was charming and as willing to work as Rev. Johnson was. They were an asset to the church and the community.

The Johnsons had not been in Spring Hope long before the members realized they would have to take some more positive steps toward acquiring a new pastorium. A beginning must be made. The Building Fund had grown enough to buy a lot, but not to build. First things had to come first. The Trustees of the church were empowered to investigate and purchase, if feasible, a vacant lot on Nash Street owned by J.J. Pitts. The Deed for that property was registered in the County office on December 30, 1943, Deed Book 485, page 255. It states:

J.J. Pitts, unmarried, to C.E. Morgan, P.E. Daniel, and J.A. Morgan, Trustees of First Baptist Church of Spring Hope for \$1,000.00, the land adjoining E.F. Vester, G.J. May, B.E. Morgan Estate, and Nash Street except a 50 foot strip of lot sold to G.J. May by the said J.J. Pitts.

The church gave a welcoming reception for the Johnsons in December at the Annex on Railroad Street. Katie became involved in the Choir, the youth work, and the Missionary Society. She was Y.W.A. leader, Baptist Training Union leader, and Circle Leader at various times. Two other children, Sue and Ann were born to the Johnsons while they were in Spring Hope.

Rev. John Link, pastor of Warrenton Baptist Church, led the Revival services in June, 1944. Membership was growing. There was a definite need for more space. The pastor led the church to realize that better living

conditions for the Johnsons was important and vital. Rev. Faulk had stressed the urgency for such a project. Rev. Johnson helped to make the need a reality. A special Parsonage Fund Drive was emphasized in 1944. By the end of the year it had reached \$4,070.50. By October, 1945, the balance in the fund was \$7,942.04. The Trustees were empowered to locate a suitable house to buy for the pastorium, since the fund was not large enough to build on the lot purchased in December, 1943. The Moses house on Nash Street was available.

The Moses house was owned by Mrs. Martha Ann Moses, a loyal member of the church and widowed mother of Mrs. S.R. May. The Trustees were empowered to buy the Moses property at 219 Nash Street. The Deed was transferred on November 15, 1945, by Mrs. Moses to B.G. Morgan, W.M. Delbridge, and M.E. Edwards, Trustees of First Baptist Church, Spring Hope, for the purchase price of \$5,000.00, \$500.00 of the amount was donated by Mrs. Moses to the church and the church treasurer paid the \$4,500.00 difference. S.E. Lamm notarized the deed. It was duly registered on November 19, 1945, in Deed Book 501, page 177, Nash County, N.C.

The house was 100 years old, but well preserved. There were certain repairs and painting that needed to be done, however. The cost of getting the house ready for occupancy was \$1,167.56 leaving a balance in the parsonage fund for further needs. The pastor and his family moved on January 16, 1946, to the newly acquired pastorium. It was a great improvement over the house on Hopkins Avenue. The last rent check was paid to Mrs. Gaskins on January 22, 1946, for rent through January 21, 1946.

Johnson lost no time in stressing the need for an education building. It was felt that the sale of the Annex would give a reasonable sum to start another Building Fund. The men's class was meeting regularly in the Annex, but it was believed that other arrangements could be made for them. The Trustees were empowered to sell the Annex. On March 10, 1946, in a called Conference, the church voted to sell the Annex property for \$4,000.00. The Deed of Transfer was registered on March 18, 1946, in Nash County Deed Book 501, page 507, and states: "B.G. Morgan, W.M. Delbridge, and Elmo Edwards, Trustees of First Baptist Church, Spring Hope, convey to Colonial Frozen Food of Spring Hope, Inc." the Railroad Street property. Preceding the sale on March 18, the Trustees had to ask for a quitclaim to the property because Emma C. Lawrence, wife of Robert C. Lawrence, had never signed the deed for her interest of 37.43% in Southern Cotton Oil Company. The deed of April 22, 1935, was recorded May 9, 1935, Nash County Deed Book 389, page 441. Since Lawrence had died testate, leaving his widow as sole devisee, Southern Cotton Oil Company

claimed no right, title, or interest. It was necessary in 1946 to have Mrs. Lawrence sign a quitclaim to the property. Such are the snares of business transactions. The Trustees had been working since January, 1946, to sell the property, but eventually the proper signature was secured.

The October report at the church Conference, 1946, revealed that \$6,347.35 was in the Sunday School Building Fund and the pastorium fund showed a balance of \$2,549.18. G.C. Lassiter, Treasurer, made the report. The November 6, 1946, minutes of the church in Conference states that the church voted to canvass members for the Sunday School Building Fund setting a goal of \$10,000.00. They also voted to revise the church roll. The Association statistics for 1945 state that there were at that time 413 members of the church, 220 of whom were non-residents. At the same November Conference, the Trustees, B.G. Morgan, Chairman, recommended that handrails be placed at the front steps of the church, that the front doors of the church be repaired and painted, that lights be placed over each of the front doors, that classroom walls and ceilings be painted, the pastor's study painted and the vestibule floors repaired. They also recommended increasing the insurance on the building, furniture and fixtures. All of these improvements were approved by the Conference and subsequently accomplished.

Rev. Johnson had taken the large room at the South entrance of the church for his study. The men's class had purchased a tarpaulin tent to hold their class sessions. It stood on the then vacant lot where the education building was later erected.

The Boy Scouts were paid \$10.00 in June, 1945, to clean the church grounds. Mrs. F.D. Bissett was Church Clerk, Darwin Weaver was Church Treasurer, M.V. Parrish was Training Union leader, Johnny Edwards was Sunday School Superintendent, and Mrs. M.H. Privette was W.M.U. President. There were 139 W.M.U. members, twenty-five Sunbeams, eighteen Royal Ambassadors, twenty-one Girls' Auxiliary, and fifteen Young Women's Auxiliary. The building reserve fund was \$7,848.50. \$480.00 was pledged to the Cooperative Program. Mrs. Neville's G.A. group gave a Christmas play in 1945. Katie Johnson was Y.W.A. leader; Miss Eileen Tedder, teacher in the local public schools, was Vacation Bible School principal and was paid \$20.00 for her services. Dr. Carl Townsend preached at the revival in June, 1945, for \$75.00 and Rev. Guy Moore was paid \$50.00 to lead the singing. Ninety-three members subscribed to *The Biblical Recorder*.

The North Carolina Baptist Convention in session on July 30, 1946, accepted an offer of \$10,000.00 from the Smith Reynolds Foundation for Wake Forest College to build and locate in Winston-Salem. In the fall of 1951 Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary was established on the



former Wake Forest campus. The college had moved in 1950 to its new home in Winston-Salem with Dr. Harold W. Tribble as the new president.

The church roll was revised in the fall of 1946 to eliminate those members who were not located and about whom no information could be found. The revision revealed that 220 of the 413 members were non-resident. No results of the revision were located. The new Treasurer as of October 1, 1946, was G.C. Lassiter. His records have helped considerably in gathering information.

Mrs. C.R. Speight's Sunday School Class voted to buy 150 new hymnals for the sanctuary, the kind to be selected by the choir. The choir felt that 125 were enough and in March, 1947, 125 new SERVICE HYMNALS were purchased from the Baptist Book Store at 95 cents each. Total cost was \$118.75 for the hymnals and \$9.32 for the express charges. Dr. I. Beverly Lake, of Wake Forest, was guest minister on June 8, 1947. He was paid \$20.00 but declined to accept the check and asked that the church keep the money.

A silver urn was presented to the church in April, 1947, in memory of Aircorpsman Opie Gray Edwards, who was shot down and killed in service over Hungary on December 12, 1944. Mrs. B.B. James, his aunt, of Elizabeth City, was the donor.

Lee Moore painted the pastor's study and the classroom walls and ceilings in March, 1947, for \$626.00. The Building Fund had reached \$8,923.40. Plans and blueprints were drawn up for the building of the new Sunday School facilities but were not submitted to the church for approval until September. After some changes the architectural firm, Charles C. Benton and Son, of Wilson, was paid on April 29, 1948—an initial payment of \$750.00.

The local W.M.U. gathered enough clothing in May, 1947, to send a large box to the needy in Japan. The church paid the express on sending the box to the World Servicenter. Rev. Johnson and Mrs. M.V. Parrish attended the Assembly in Ridgecrest in June, 1947. Vacation Bible School was held at the school building in June due to repair work taking place within the church. Dr. Broadus Jones preached at the revival in June and Julian Motley from Wake Forest College led the singing and conducted the Vacation Bible School.

Rev. Johnson resigned the Spring Hope pastorate in Conference on June 4, 1947. He stated that as of July 6, 1947, he would no longer fill the First Baptist Church pulpit. He went on to say that he had accepted a larger church at Mount Moriah near Raleigh. The membership was stunned. They hated to see him go but felt that he must not be denied the opportunity for advancement.

Much praise is due Rev. Johnson and Mrs. Johnson for the spirit they

W.C. Collection / UNC-Chapel Hill

nourished among the members. Both were industrious and lovable. The family was a happy family. While in Spring Hope, Rev. Johnson served as Auditor and Superintendent of the Roanoke Sunday School Association.

The budget for 1946-1947 had been \$18,445.55. The following pulpit committee was named on June 4, 1947: Theo Easom, M.E. Edwards, Mrs. G.C. Lassiter, Mrs. M.V. Parrish, and Mrs. J.A. Morgan. They went to Wake Forest College for leads in securing a pastor.

The pastor's paragraph in the Sunday, July 6, 1947, bulletin reads:

As we bring our work to a close to-day, having been your pastor for nearly four years, it is no easy task to say what is in my heart. Words are useless sometimes and when one must leave friends, they cannot tell the deep feelings that have been buried in the heart through the years. Mrs. Johnson, the children, and I know that we have many friends in Spring Hope, although we have not accomplished what we aspired to in your midst. We shall always remember you as our friends and thank God for the many blessings upon our church while we lived among you.

Now, as we go to a new field of work, we desire your prayers and will look to Spring Hope with great anticipation for even greater work than has been done during this pastorate. May God's richest blessings ever be yours.

It was a sad Sunday morning, but thoughts must turn to the task at hand.

### **Harold L. Hawkins, 1947-1951**

Rev. Harold Hawkins, a North Carolina native, who had graduated from Mars Hill, Wake Forest, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and who had served in 1945-1946 as a Chaplain in the U.S. Navy, agreed to preach a trial sermon in First Baptist Church on July 13, 1947. He was at that time Executive Director of the Home Security Council in Lexington, Kentucky and was just completing work at the summer school of the University of Kentucky. After his sermon on July 13, the church met in conference on July 16 and voted to call Rev. Hawkins to fill the Spring Hope pulpit. He would receive \$2,700.00 annually.

The Hawkins Family moved into the parsonage at 219 Nash Street. Margaret, the wife and mother, was a bride of three years. They had one son, Donnie, who was a babe in arms. Margaret was active in the church work, a good helpmate for her husband. Both Rev. and Margaret made friends easily. He was a great cajoler, liked to fish and enjoyed plain work. He wished to equip the large room on the south side of the pulpit as his



study. There was a door which led to the outside. The church voted to buy a typewriter, desk, filing cabinet and to install a telephone and a light in the new pastor's study. Hawkins was authorized to keep the key to the organ in order to properly supervise the use of it. An oil burner was added to the pastor's study and the pastorium was weatherstripped.

An anonymous gift of chimes, controlled at the organ, had been made. They were purchased through the church from Levy-Page Co. Inc. in Norfolk, Virginia, at a cost of \$375.00 for the vibrato control. Carl Banks wired the pastor's study for adequate lighting. The pastor's salary was raised in February, 1948, by \$25.00 per month. By May the Building Fund had reached \$20,283.48. Sunday School enrollment was reported at 244. The largest membership ever in the Missionary Union up to that time was reported by Sallie Morris Morgan. The church voted in May, 1948, to dispense with Sunday night services during July and August.

The blueprints for the education building were submitted for bids. A building fund committee was named as follows: Mrs. C.E. Morgan, Mrs. Raymond Bass, Mrs. A.T. May, Mrs. J.A. Morgan, Mrs. Roland Geddie, B.W. Sykes, W.G. Edwards, O.B. Moss, M.V. Parrish and G.C. Lassiter. By September, 1948, the fund had reached \$20,283.48. Bids were accepted for building the Education Building. The church voted on December 12, 1948, to accept Mr. Wyatt's bid of \$54,490.70 which did not include heating, plumbing and wiring. There was then \$21,119.76 in the Fund. B.F. Wood made the motion to accept the bid provided the money could be raised. J.R. Vann seconded the motion which carried. Alas! In January, 1949, the Building Committee reported that due to the rise in building costs the bid which was approved in December would have to be raised \$1,100.00 and the plumbing, wiring, heating would bring an increase of \$3,000.00. The committee had investigated ways of raising the balance and found that the church and pastor's home would have to be mortgaged and personal endorsements secured to raise the balance. The church voted to reject previous offers and defer seeking new bids.

Dr. W.W. Shrader led the preaching at revival in October, 1948. Choir robes were purchased at a cost of \$272.47. Mrs. J.B. Weaver purchased supplies for the mimeograph. A pulpit robe was ordered for Rev. Hawkins. He was a tall, slender gentleman and it was necessary to measure for his robe. Elizabeth Ann Gay, high school student, began to work in the pastor's office in March, 1949, at 50 cents an hour. Rev. Hawkins was busy with pastoring, encouraging the raising of funds and working with the young people. The B.T.U. was meeting regularly in the evenings with Story Hour, Juniors and Intermediates. The groups were served refreshments each Sunday night. Mrs. A.T. May reported that the chimes needed repair in March, 1949. It would be necessary to contact the

company in Norfolk where they were purchased. Mrs. R.T. Geddie was appointed to call the firm to come and repair them. It was done.

During this time the men continued to meet in the tent. The church voted in Conference on October 24, 1948, to repair the ropes to the tent. Some repairs were needed at the pastorium, a new roof over the back porch, paint the hall and bath and install an oil heater there. Family night covered dish suppers were held every fourth Sunday night. The bulletins for church service were ordered each quarter from the Baptist Bulletin Service. The mimeograph machine was no longer usable. The Business Department at school assumed the printing of the bulletins in September, 1949, under the supervision of Miss Anna Scott, teacher. The bulletins were mimeographed. The church supplied the stencils and paper. The Business Department was paid 50 cents per week. They continued printing each week until March 1, 1950.

A joint picnic was held with the Methodists in the late summer of 1949. The church had G.W. Bunn, Jr. measure Dr. Cullom for a suit for which the church paid \$50.00. He had lost so much weight that his clothes were too large for him. Mrs. Geddie was responsible for decorating the church for Christmas in 1948 and 1949. Mrs. Mary Bergeron repaired the Junior choir robes in 1949 for \$13.75. Open house was held for Dr. Cullom in observance of his 83rd birthday on January 15, 1950.

By February, 1949, there was \$25,469.05 in the Education Building Fund. The last report before any invoices were paid showed a total of \$26,270.05 on June 1, 1949. Six thousand common brick were delivered from the Cherokee Brick Company, Raleigh on June 8, 1949. Six thousand were delivered at each of seven times during the month of June, 1949, a total of 48,000 bricks at \$28.00 per thousand. The church was given a dealer's discount through Edwards Brothers, a discount for hauling, discount for the church and a discount of 50 cents per thousand for paying cash. The net cost to the church was \$18.00 per thousand. It had been decided to build on a cost of materials plus labor basis in order to complete the project more economically. This plan necessitated paying the labor weekly. The General Contractor for the labor was Clinton Braziel, of Sandy Cross. The first check found other than paying the architect \$750.00 was made to L.W. Murray for \$210.00 in June, 1949, for hauling brick. Jake Ward Batchelor was paid in August for pouring the cement footings. Elmo Medlin was the labor supervisor on the job. Some of those who helped were J.T. Tyson, L. Benton, Henry Winstead, Dewitt Stallings, Willis Williams. The work had begun in earnest. David Herndon and his crew laid the brick work. J. T. Neville, Nashville, provided the sand. Gray Concrete Pipe Co., Inc. sold the cement. Noland and Co., Inc. sent W.A. White to install the plumbing and Jesse Smith to install the heating. Peeden

Steel Company sold the structural steel; Dick's Electric Co. was given the electrical contract; James Bailey, the plastering; and Waters Brothers and Barnes Tin Shop the contract for installing the roof and sheet metal work. Local stores supplied paint, nails, bolts, incidental materials procured from Brantley, Wood and Co., Spring Hope Grocery Co., O.B. Baines Hardware, Builders Supply Co., R.I. Mitchell and Sons, Inc., Edwards Brothers, Collie's Plumbing and Heating, and paid L and M Motor Co. for welding steam pipe. The last check stub located was dated July 28, 1950, payable to Clinton L. Brazier, General Contractor, for labor to July 21, 1950, for \$603.39. The final cost of the building was between \$44,000.00 and \$45,000.00.

After the construction on the Education Building was started, it was necessary for the church to arrange to borrow some money. The First Citizens Bank issued a note to M.E. Edwards, B.W. Sykes, Lillian J. Wood, Trustees, on April 3, 1950, on behalf of First Baptist Church, Spring Hope in the amount of \$12,500.00, mortgaging lots 23, 24 and 25, the original plot of ground deeded to the church in 1894 and also mortgaging the buildings thereon. There was a stipulation that the church must insure for 3/4 value of the buildings on this land. This was authorized by the church on February 22, 1950. Recorded Book 552, page 21, Nash County Court House, April 3, 1950, by William S. Bunn, Register of Deeds. The loan was paid by February 2, 1952.

Elizabeth Ann Gay was still helping in the pastor's office each week for 50 cents an hour. Mary Leigh Brantley started printing the bulletins in March, 1950. The church had purchased a used mimeograph machine from the school. Mary Leigh continued to print the bulletins for the next year. Cicero Womble painted the parsonage in June, 1950. The Men's Class helped in the expense of buying chairs for the Men's Class by paying \$165.00 to the Southern Desk Company on September 21, 1950. The Revival was held in November. Dr. Wayne Oates led the preaching and was paid \$125.00.

Mrs. Ben Wood and Mrs. F.D. Bissett were named to have the windows in the Education Building washed in September, 1950. The ladies of the church met on a Saturday in September with buckets, cloths, and cleaners in hand and washed all the windows. The windows were measured and the cost of blinds investigated.

Rev. Hawkins taught a six weeks course on church membership beginning in October, 1950. The church presented Bibles to the children who completed the study. The Trustees were asked in November to have tables built for the dining room of the Education Building. Mr. Bonnie Hinton supervised the building of the tables.

Mr. Bill Waters, Music Director for Spring Hope Public Schools, was

asked to direct the Christmas music in First Baptist in December, 1950 and 1951.

Bonnie Bowden sanded the floors in the church vestibule in January. The tilework was completed at the door of the old pastor's study in the church. A bad place in the plaster in the sanctuary was repaired. Elmo Medlin was hired to fix a sidewalk up to the door of the Education Building. A public address system was donated by the school. The church voted to establish a policy of lending it for church purposes only.

The W.M.U. reported on September 27, 1950, that there were 175 members enrolled and 106 attended the mission study class. Mrs. M.V. Parrish was President. There were four circles: namely, Sophie Lanneau, Winnie Ayers, Lela McNeill Privette, and Katie Johnson. There were complaints about the matter of heating the pastor's study and the ladies' parlor for use when the entire building was not heated. The matter was referred to the Trustees.

J.T. Edwards reported on December 6, 1950 for the Building Fund Committee. He stated that \$43,475.94 had been paid to date. There was \$4,719.71 balance on hand and the \$12,500.00 note was due on February 1, 1951. The building was now in use. The Senior Fidelis Class furnished the Ladies' parlor upstairs. This class was renamed the Lillian Finch class for a revered former teacher. They bought a hooked rug, placed a sofa, chairs and lamps, all of which were later placed in the new pastorium.

The kitchen was equipped; Mrs. Ben Morgan gave a new electric range. Silver flatware was bought by individuals. Dishes in the Adam pattern were contributed by various individuals. The women of the church provided dish towels. Some cabinets and counters were built. Others were added at a later date. The refrigerator was installed. Mrs. Bonnie Hinton and Mrs. Henry Brantley were the first kitchen custodians.

From time to time through the years the question of new membership qualification had arisen. The church minutes of December 6, 1950, gave a rather full statement as follows:

The basis on which a person is received into the fellowship of our church is for that person to confess Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord. Concerning baptism our policy and doctrine are as follows: We believe the New Testament teaches baptism by immersion. There is not the slightest evidence that any other is taught. Therefore, we believe that

We shall continue to teach and practice baptism by immersion as the best form of baptism and that baptism should follow a person's acceptance of Christ. But our principle of church and Christian fellowship is and always will be life commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. This



matter has been fully discussed by the Board of Deacons and its principle and policy are unanimously recommended to the church. The (Deacon's) meeting was held on November 15, 1950.

H.L. Hawkins, Pastor  
Mrs. F.D. Bissette, Secretary

It is not stated that any action was taken on the Deacons' recommendation. It seems to be a clarification of the meaning of the by-law concerning membership.

The door leading to the outside from the former pastor's study in the church was moved so that it would be in line with the side door of the Education Building. Later a breezeway with tiles was completed between the church and the new building to make easy access from one to the other.

By Spring, 1951, the new structure was complete, equipped, and being put to full use. The \$12,500.00 note at First Citizens was reduced to \$7,500.00 in February, 1951.

Rev. Hawkins resigned on April 8, 1951, to become effective on May 1, 1951. His announcement came as a surprise, but he had been eager to get back into chaplaincy service. He wanted to become a full time Chaplain at Rapides General Hospital in Alexandria, La., where he would go to serve for 16 years. First Baptist Church reluctantly accepted his resignation with good memories and much appreciation for his hard work, enthusiasm, and ability to stimulate enthusiasm among his people. It was with sadness that they saw his lovely wife, Margaret, and their children, Donnie and Elaine, as well as Rev. Hawkins, take their leave. Elaine had been born in Spring Hope. All people love babies and she was no exception. Dr. Cullom came on September 26, 1948, to dedicate the two children to the Lord. The ladies of the church enjoyed making things easier for Margaret and the men were always ready to drop everything to go fishing with the preacher. That was his hobby. Yes, the Hawkins family would be missed, but they felt it was time to move toward the future for themselves and for the church. The Education Building is a monument to Hawkins' tenure in Spring Hope and to his enthusiasm for getting things done. He preached his final sermon here on April 30, 1951.

### **James H. Blackmore - 1951-1961**

Upon Hawkins' resignation it was necessary to designate a Pulpit Committee. Those named were: M.V. Parrish, Mrs. Gus Neville, Mrs. A.T. May, Mrs. J.B. Weaver, Senator O.B. Moss, T.B. Hollingsworth, and Rex Stevens. They were elected at a called conference on April 18, 1951, to secure a suitable pastor. They asked Dr. Cullom to help them in finding an

interim pastor until a resident could be found. He was a great help. The treasurer's account book shows that the pulpit was filled every Sunday from May 1 through September 30, 1951, with most of the supply pastors coming from Wake Forest College. They were friends and former colleagues of Dr. Cullom, who were concerned that services be held regularly. Prayer meetings and Sunday evening services were suspended during the summer months.

On July 15, 1951, Rev. James H. Blackmore was asked to preach a trial sermon at Spring Hope Baptist. He had graduated from Wake Forest College in 1937 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree cum laude. He had received the Divinity Degree at Colgate University in 1940 and had served as Chaplain and Major in the U.S. Army in Europe, 1943-1946. He elected in 1949 to work toward the Doctorate Degree at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. Completing his work there in the spring of 1951, he was waiting to learn if his dissertation had been acceptable. He learned that it needed some revision, so must continue to work on it for a while. On July 18, the church met in conference and voted to extend the call to Rev. Blackmore. He accepted and agreed to assume his duties in Spring Hope on October 1, 1951.

That summer Luther Bartlett Hager was examined as a candidate for the gospel ministry. A Presbyterian of eight ordained Baptist ministers met in the local church on August 26, 1951 to question and approve Mr. Hager for service as a minister. M.V. Parrish, Chairman of Spring Hope Baptist Deacons, chaired the session. Rev. Hager delivered the sermon on the following Sunday in the local church.

The Sunday School picnic was held in July, 1951. William Edwards resigned as Superintendent in the spring. Mrs. B.G. Morgan agreed to complete his term until October 1. Rev. Blackmore came one Sunday in July and was distressed that a woman was Sunday School Director. He felt that was a man's task. He did not hesitate to express how he felt about it. Needless to say, a man, E.C. Daniel, was elected for 1951-1952. Mrs. Mary Edwards was W.M.U. President. She reported 137 members. The church allocated \$949.42 to the Cooperative Program and \$1,912.28 to missions. \$7,500.00 had been paid on the note. This left a balance of \$5,000.00 due.

During the summer of 1951 the parsonage was insulated, weather-stripped, given new flooring, a new kitchen range and a new refrigerator. Each step made 219 Nash Street more comfortable for the Blackmores. Deacon Chairman Parrish, the Board of Deacons and the Trustees kept the affairs of the church in order. But for the excellent records of Clerk Navada Bissett and Treasurer "Red" Lassiter the summer's activities may well have been uncertain.



Rev. Blackmore and his wife, Ruth, moved to the parsonage on October 1, 1951. They had no children. Ruth was a very capable person, was an excellent help to the church and community, and was a strong helpmate for her husband. Her ability to adapt was outstanding. She loved people and they loved her. Rev. Blackmore and Ruth had married in 1945. She was from Iowa City, Iowa. Upon moving into the parsonage the Blackmores were given a pantry shower.

Rev. Blackmore went into homes, offices, schools, fields, even into the liquor store, or any place that members of his church worked. He made friends first of all. That was not difficult for him and Ruth because they were naturally friendly and kind-spirited. He ministered to his church families with the best pastoral care while at the same time he was giving the best spiritual guidance from the pulpit.

Rev. Blackmore was notified in December, 1951, that he had earned the Doctoral Degree from the University of Edinburgh. The First Baptist Church of Spring Hope honored him on December 10, by having the degree conferred at a special service. Dr. Cullom assisted in the service. Thereafter it was a particular pleasure to his members and a sense of accomplishment to himself that he was officially Dr. Blackmore. He was frequently called Dr. Cullom by slip rather than design. The members had grown accustomed to saying Dr. Cullom. It was easy to make the mistake. They were so similar in nature. It was learned that Dr. Blackmore was planning to write a biography of Dr. Cullom. What better place to begin than at Spring Hope in the church and with the people Dr. Cullom loved so well and where he was loved in return!

Dr. Blackmore began the church work with zeal. He was a small, wiry man quick-witted, jovial, at the same time very serious. He spoke powerful messages from the pulpit. They were forceful, timely and provocative! He spoke on segregation several times, alcoholism, understanding the Bible, man's humanity and man's dominion, among many topics. Sunday evening worship services were restored. Prayer meetings started again on November 7, 1951. The young people of the church were responding well.

One of the first requests he made was that the church furnish booklets to be presented at marriages, funerals, baptisms, and to be presented to children who did not have a Bible. The church agreed. Dr. Blackmore stressed the need for more friendliness and hospitality to strangers after morning services.

The Boy Scouts had asked for his help in working on the God and Country Merit Badge requirements. He worked with them and in July, 1953 he took seven of the boys to Fort Caswell for a week as a step toward that accomplishment. They held places of responsibility in the life of the

church during their training period. In the fall of 1956 those seven high school seniors received the God and Country Award at morning worship service. They were: Tom Edwards, Jimmy Daniel, Gus Neville, Bill Lassiter, Jimmy Parrish, Jimmy Pearce and Van Weaver. These boys were active in the life of the church as long as they lived in Spring Hope. Dr. Blackmore constantly encouraged all the young people, especially for Bible School in the summer and for Training Union throughout the year.

The mimeograph machine was repaired in December, 1951. Mrs. Blackmore and Mrs. J.B. Weaver were responsible for printing the bulletins each week. That December Mr. William Waters, High School Chorus Director, supervised the Christmas music for the annual special choir service. He was paid \$25.00. He repeated the same service in 1952. Miss Ida Privette was the regular music director and added many scores to the choir library. The church worked with the Methodists in providing Christmas baskets for the needy. Seventy-five Ionia folding chairs were purchased for the Assembly Hall at a cost of \$352.50 from Southern Desk Co. Dr. Blackmore gained permission from the church to give Bibles to all candidates for membership upon baptism. Mrs. Gus Neville took the communion set to James M. Fox, Jeweler, Rocky Mount, to have it resilvered. Treasurer Lassiter paid Fox \$52.00 for the cost on March 17, 1952. Mrs. Geddie bought and supervised the labor and planting of shrubbery at the parsonage in April, 1952 at the cost of \$38.30. Dr. Blackmore asked the church to purchase a Porto-lift which was a hydraulic tool for getting bed-ridden patients out of bed. The church purchased the lift in June, 1952, for \$225.00. The whereabouts of the lift is unknown today.

The first week in July, 1952, the church voted that revival need be for one week only instead of the two weeks that it had been held previously. Rev. James M. Hayes led the revival preaching. The church voted to leave off inviting a singer. Ten were gained by baptism, twenty-three by letter, but twenty-seven were lost by death or by letter. The total membership totaled 428. A Year Book was printed that fall for October, 1952 through September, 1953. It was titled "My Church" and measured 3 1/2 inches by 6 inches with seventeen printed pages. A photograph of the church and education building appeared on the front cover. This is believed to have been a first for the Spring Hope Church. It contained the church covenant, calendar of special dates for the year, general officers of the church, active deacons and the full diaconate, the choir, hymns of the month, flower schedule for church services, church greeters, ushers, Sunday School officers and teachers, children's Christmas program chairman, daily Vacation Bible School officers and teachers, Baptist Training Union leaders, W.M.U. leaders and auxiliaries, church roll of resident members,

servicemen, college students, a note to non-resident members and a list of emergency scriptures. The calendar for 1953 was on the back cover. This was a lot of information gathered in one small booklet that could be carried in one's pocket. The Year Book has been printed annually since 1952-1953.

A hail storm damaged one of the stained glass windows. This was repaired in 1952. A fund to build a new parsonage was started. The note of \$5,000.00 due on Feb. 1, 1952, was paid in full. The church was clear of debt. Rails for the church steps were placed in September. Dr. Blackmore requested that the full Diaconate meet once a year for supper. The Deacons Supper has been an annual tradition since 1952. The Board of Deacons was named to serve as the Nominating Committee. Mrs. Henry Brantley, Mr. Parrish and T.B. Hollingsworth completed their three years as Deacons. N.W. Beddingfield, D.C. Weaver and Melba Bartholomew were elected to serve with J.T. Edwards, Mrs. B.G. Morgan and E.C. Daniel who had one year yet to serve and with Bruce Sykes, Rex Stevens and Mrs. R.E. Mitchell who had yet two years to serve.

Cal Lassiter and Ted Bissett were named to be the church photographers; Mrs. Geddie, Mrs. Elmo Edwards, and Mrs. F.D. Bissett to look after the church grounds; Mrs. Albert May was made custodian of the kitchen; Mrs. Blackmore and Mrs. J.B. Weaver were responsible for printing the church bulletins; Mr. George Bunn and Miss Dorothy Saunders were church historians; Trustees were Elmo Edwards, R.T. Geddie, Mrs. J.E. Upchurch and Mrs. J. T. Edwards; each served four years, with one per year ending his term of office. Mrs. F.D. Bissett continued to be church clerk; G.C. Lassiter, the treasurer; Mrs. Thelma Brogden was in charge of the church nursery; Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Sykes were responsible for the communion service; Mrs. Thelma May for non-resident members; Mr. and Mrs. Warren Brantley for servicemen; Mrs. J.T. Edwards for college students; Mrs. Thelma May and R.L. Pitts for new members; and for *The Biblical Recorder* subscriptions, Mrs. J.A. Morgan, Mrs. Theo Easom, Miss Sarah Brantley, Mrs. J.L. Gay, Mrs. Acree, Mrs. Stott, and Mrs. Ben Morgan. Intermediate girls were responsible for the church scrapbook; the bell ringers were the intermediate boys; the windows and doors, the junior boys and the little janitors were the junior girls. Mrs. C.R. Speight was the telephoner.

Mrs. G.C. Lassiter was organist for the church. Miss Ida Privette was Choir Director. A.L. Honeycutt, the Choir Librarian and Mrs. Arthur Morgan the Choir Treasurer. Sopranos were: Mrs. G.W. Bunn, Jr., Mrs. J.A. Morgan, Miss Ida Privette, Mrs. J.H. Blackmore, Mrs. Jason Hawks. Altos were: Mrs. R.L. Pitts, Mrs. M.V. Parrish, Mrs. B.G. Morgan, Anne Bridgers Bunn and Mary Leigh Brantley. Tenors and basses were J.A.

Morgan, M.V. Parrish, R.T. Geddie, A.L. Honeycutt, John Morgan, Ted Bissett, Fred Daniel and C.H. Stallings.

Chairman for flowers for church services was Mrs. O.B. Baines. Carl Banks was chairman of church greeters and T.B. Hollingsworth was chairman of church ushers. The Sunday School Superintendent was Curtis Daniel with Grover Godwin as assistant. The secretary was C.J. Joyner, with H.D. Daniel and Tom Hollingsworth, assistants. Sunday School pianist was Anne Bridgers Bunn with Jessie Mae Luper, assistant. The song leader was C.H. Stallings, and Mrs. R.L. Pitts, assistant.

The heads of departments were: Nursery, Mrs. Grover Godwin and Mrs. E.S. Purkerson; Beginners, Mrs. Gus Neville; 1st Primary, Mrs. Martha Paskeswich; 2nd Primary, Mrs. Curtis Daniel; 3rd Primary, Mrs. J.H. Blackmore; Junior boys, L.T. Bartholomew; Junior girls, Mrs. Henry Brantley; Intermediate boys, Billy Delbridge; Intermediate girls, Mrs. B.G. Morgan; Senior boys, B.P. Hinton; Senior girls, Mrs. N.W. Beddingfield; Young men, Rex Stevens; Young women, Mrs. M.V. Parrish; Men's Bible Class, M.V. Parrish; Senior Fidelis Class, Mrs. N.H. Finch; Extension Department, Mrs. R.E. Mitchell.

The Christmas Tree Committee was J.A. Morgan and R.T. Geddie. The church decorator was Mrs. R. T. Geddie; Christmas program chairman, Mrs. J.H. Blackmore; refreshment chairman, Mrs. J.A. Morgan and white gifts chairman, Mrs. I.C. Farr. Daily Vacation Bible School Principal was Mrs. M.V. Parrish; teachers were Mrs. G.C. Godwin, Mrs. Gus Neville, Mrs. Elmo Edwards, Mrs. B.G. Morgan; Boys handwork, Rex Stevens; Girls' handwork, Mrs. N.W. Beddingfield and Refreshments, Mrs. J.A. Morgan.

Baptist Training Union Director was Mrs. J.H. Blackmore; secretary, Miss Mary Wheless; chorister, Ted Bissett and pianist, Myra Edwards. Leaders were Juniors, Mr. and Mrs. William S. Cheaves; Intermediates, Don Smith; Seniors, Dr. J.H. Blackmore. Woman's Missionary Society leaders were: President, Mrs. M.E. Edwards; Vice-President, Mrs. N.W. Beddingfield; Secretary, Mrs. L.T. Bartholomew; Treasurer, Mrs. Willard Pace; Sophie Lanneau Circle, Jessie Mae Luper; Winnie Ayers Circle, Mrs. W.P. Wheless; Lelia McNeill Privette Circle, Mrs. J.F. Sykes; Katie Johnson Circle, Mrs. Elmo Bissette. Sunbeams, Mrs. Henry Brantley; Young People, Mrs. J.A. Morgan; Community Missions, Mrs. I.C. Farr, and Mission Study, Mrs. Carl Banks. Beginner Sunbeams, Mrs. Robert Toney; Primary Sunbeams, Mrs. Alfred Wheless; Junior Royal Ambassadors, Mrs. Gus Neville; Junior Girls' Auxiliary, Mrs. Darwin Weaver; and Intermediate Girls' Auxiliary, Mrs. Raymond Bass and Mrs. Floyd Earl Williams.

Two hundred sixty-eight members were listed along with the follow-



ing people in military service: Bobby Brantley, Ben Collie, Hobart Corbett, John Corbett, Alex Greene, Clarence C. Johnson, Robert Lee Pitts, Jr., Kenneth Pitts, Julian Proctor, Earl Purkerson, Herbert Wheless, Bill Wilder, Braxton Wilder and David Wood.

The following college students were listed: Jane Ann Bass, Maxine Bissett, Westray Bunn, Carol Corbett, Mary Elizabeth Delbridge, Ann Hollingsworth, Ava Honeycutt, Charles Cree Hunter, Rudy Johnson, Bobby Jones, Frances Marshbourne, Albert May, Phyllis May, Annie Vince May, Richard Morgan, Reginald Moss, and Durwood Stallings.

This is a skeleton of the various facets of work in the church thirty-seven years ago. More than a generation has passed since then. There are few of the former names today and there are many new ones. Each had a part in shaping the growth and development of the church in its one hundred year history.

The floor tile between the church and the education building was laid in 1952. Mrs. R.T. Geddie, Mrs. Bill Edwards, and Mrs. F.D. Bissett selected the tile. Bill Edwards gave \$300.00 toward the expense. The Deacons recommended inviting the Association to meet in the local church in 1953. This was done. A driveway was made at the rear of the church for the convenience of older people and for funerals. Floor covering was purchased for the nursery and the beginner classrooms.

The church began giving the pastor car expense in October, 1952, in the amount of \$25.00 per month. The treasurer was authorized to buy a complete communion tray with glasses and two bread plates. Dr. Cullom was named Pastor Emeritus in October, 1952 with a \$10.00 a month honorarium for life. Dr. Blackmore wanted business cards and the church agreed. Jimmie Parrish cut the grass during the summer. Thirty-five song books, *Christian Worship and Praise*, were purchased for the Sunday School from Harper and Brothers. A gas heater was installed in the pastor's study. A Christmas pageant was presented in 1952 by the young people. Mrs. J.R. Swain, Music teacher, directed the Christmas music.

Dr. Blackmore's and Ruth's parents were getting feeble. Mr. Blackmore in Warsaw had an enlarged heart and became a bed patient. Dr. Blackmore's sister, Janie Belle, was a victim of multiple sclerosis which had its onset in 1947 with spasms in her legs. By 1952 she could not feed herself and thereafter became a total invalid until her death in January, 1961. Dr. Blackmore spent as much time as he could each week in helping out with the care of his father and sister in Warsaw. His responsibilities in Warsaw did not invade upon his efforts in the Spring Hope Church.

Stalls for the restrooms in the education building were installed in July, 1952. Daylon Green was planning to study for the ministry. The church purchased books to help him in his studies. Fellowship hour after



Sunday night services was proving successful. Much of 1952 was spent with the concern of equipping the classrooms and departments of the education building. \$400.00 had been allocated for that.

The Diaconate banquet was set for January 15, 1953. It was changed from January 26, so that Dr. Cullom's birthday could be celebrated. The senior citizens of the church were invited. The Senior Fidelis Class served the meal. Out of this grew the Cullom Supper which is still held today. A religious census was taken January 25, 1953 in cooperation with the Methodists. Rev. Brodie was their pastor. No account of the results was found.

Mrs. M.H. Privette died in January, 1953. She had been a pillar in the church since she came with her husband and family from Dunn in 1908 to make their home. She was responsible for getting the Mission work started in First Baptist Church. Her children, Ida and Juanita, offered money to establish a church library in her memory. The library did not materialize so they gave the money for a new film projector. Mrs. Henry Brantley's class had made enough money to place wooden rails on the stairways in the education building. The nursery had not been moved to the education building by July, 1952. Plans were being made to move them. Cork flooring was suggested for the nursery to mute the sound.

Carolina Power and Light made a survey of the church lights and recommended improvements. C.S. Mitchell gave a \$250.00 memorial for his deceased mother to furnish the nursery. The nursery was dedicated July 12, 1953. Bells had been installed for ringing at the change of class. The Young Men's Class installed the system.

A fund for building a new parsonage had been started. After the note was paid in full in February, 1952, there was an excess in the building fund. There was \$1,364.96 in the parsonage fund. The Parsonage Planning and Building Committee was named in July, 1953, as follows: J.T. Edwards, G.C. Lassiter, Curtis Daniel, Mrs. Gus Neville, Mrs. F.D. Bissett, and Mrs. R.T. Geddie. They were asked to present some plans at the September, 1953 conference. The Deacons would serve as a Finance Committee for raising funds. The Committee did report on September 2, 1953, that estimates for building a new parsonage would run at least \$20,000.00 and recommended that the solicitation of funds should begin at once. There was \$2,297.49 in the fund on December 30, 1953.

The church vestibule floors were covered with rubber tile in the fall of 1953. Door stops were added. Three rugs were placed on classroom floors and prices secured for runners in the hall. Twenty five more new chairs were purchased for the Assembly Hall. A filing cabinet for choir music was purchased. The revival was held June 6-13, 1954 with Rev. Felix Arnold, pastor of Enfield Baptist Church, preaching. The Privette family had given

new pulpit Bibles, one large and one standard size, in memory of their mother, Mrs. Lelia McNeill Privette. This was reported in April, 1954. The pastorium fund was reported at the same conference. The total was \$4,847.74. The Deacons recommended that the parsonage be built. The treasurer stated that \$1,500.00 in savings could be transferred to the Pastorium Building Fund when needed. He also stated that the old pastorium in use could be offered for sale when necessary to accept or reject the bids.

The second day of The Roanoke Association meeting was announced. It would be held in the Spring Hope Church on October 13, 1954. The subject of division of the Association was to be acted upon. The Association had grown so large that it should be divided. The local church voted to favor division when the subject was brought up in the October meeting, instructing the messengers to vote in favor of division.

Some of the stained glass windows were damaged when Hurricane Carol occurred in October, 1954. These were repaired. When the Association met in Spring Hope in October, 1954, the W.M.U. prepared and served the food. M.E. Edwards was responsible for having the tables set up and Elmo Lamm was in charge of parking cars. It had been the hope that the construction of the new pastorium could begin by March, 1955. The plans had been on display at Edwards Brothers' store for inspection after being presented at Conference in July, 1954. That year three attendance records were broken. The Sunday School Director Curtis Daniel reported 310 students enrolled with high attendance at 261 and low attendance at 219.

The December, 1954 Conference voted to instruct the Building Committee to have a room added to the plans already drawn for the new parsonage. The altered plans were presented and adopted at the January, 1955, Conference. The estimated cost would be \$22,000.00. The committee would continue to serve and supervise the construction. Joe Savage, local building contractor, was awarded the job to begin construction as soon as possible. The January minutes also stated that the film projector and screen given by the Privette family had been dedicated. 1955 brought sadness to the Blackmores. His father, who lived in Warsaw, died. Members of the church grieved with them, but later in the year they rejoiced together over the birth of a dear little girl, Julia Ann Blackmore. She was blonde and dainty. It was a joy to have a baby in the church family. The College Campbell Choir sang in March at morning worship service. Their fee was \$25.00, but \$46.00 additional was given them from a special offering that was taken. A meal was served to them in the Fellowship Hall. A Cullom loan fund was established at Southeastern Seminary to honor Dr. Cullom. The Spring Hope Church gave \$100.00

toward the scholarship fund.

The new North Roanoke Association was organized May 3, 1955. Spring Hope voted to affiliate with it. The Revival had been held April 11-17 with Dr. Norfleet Gardner preaching. He was entertained for meals in the homes of members.

The parsonage at 219 Nash Street was advertised for sale on May 1, 1955, to be sold on June 1, 1955 to the highest bidder. It was sold on May 14, 1955, for \$7,550.00 to Mrs. Lucille P. Mullen with the provision that the church retain possession until the new parsonage was completed. It was agreed to allow the pastor and his family to live there until October 1, 1955. After that date the church must pay 5% interest on the purchase price until possession was delivered to Mrs. Mullen. The trustees: Mrs. J.E. Upchurch, Mrs. J.T. Edwards, Carl Banks, and O. Bruce Murray were authorized by the church to transact the sale. The deed was registered March 26, 1955, in Nash County Deed Book 633, page 310. A Deed of Trust was registered September 3, 1955, Deed Book 632, pages 171-172, between the Trustees and O.B. Moss, Trustee for First Citizens Bank and Trust Company, in the amount of \$5,000.00, payable February 1, 1956. The parsonage construction was mortgaged. The note was cancelled on February 2, 1956. Again on October 3, 1955, a Deed of Trust was effected between Trustees Martha Collie, Carl Banks, Bruce Murray, and Zelma Edwards for the church and First Citizens Bank for \$5,000.00, payable on October 1, 1956. This Deed of Trust was registered on October 11, 1955, in Nash County Deed Book 632, page 197.

Spring Hope Grocery Company gave a piano to the Sunday School Assembly Hall in memory of Mr. Ben Morgan in June, 1955. Youth Day was observed on June 26, with Van Weaver acting as Sunday School Superintendent, Jim Pearce as Sunday School Secretary and Jim Daniel in charge of morning worship. Steve Edwards gave the morning sermon and in the evening Steve conducted and Jim Daniel brought the sermon. The Youth Choir sang for both services. Myra Edwards played the piano for all services that day.

Work on the parsonage was progressing. It was time to have the yard filled in and leveled. Grover Godwin, Treasurer, reported on September 7, 1955, that \$19,105.35 had been spent thus far on the parsonage. There was \$3,307.75 on hand. J.T. Edwards stated more money was needed. That was when the Trustees were empowered to borrow \$5,000.00 to complete the building. This was to be borrowed for twelve months.

Dr. Blackmore made it a policy to resign every year around the first of September. He did this in order to save the church embarrassment in the event it wanted to get another leader. Of course, his resignations were always declined. In the fall of 1955 he presented the following goals to the





next week.

Sunday School enrollment reached 304, attendance 213. The Baptist Training Union directed by Bill Lassiter and Jimmy Parrish, had fifty-seven enrolled. Mr. and Mrs. N.W. Beddingfield led the Junior Union and Mrs. Willard Pace the Intermediate Union. Revival was held May 5 - 12, 1957, with Rev. Milton Boone preaching. There were twelve additions to the membership, eight by baptism and four by letter.

Dr. Blackmore started holding Saturday street services early in July, 1957, on the vacant lot between F.D. Bissett and Son store and B and S Store on Ash Street. Attendance was fair, but Dr. Blackmore felt that he was reaching people whom he would not have otherwise helped. These sidewalk services continued through July and August. In the fall metal tables were purchased to replace the wooden dining tables. They had been too bulky and were not easily stored. The new metal ones were shorter and could be folded for storage. Cabinets were bought for the kitchen and installed. The tops of the cabinets were covered with formica. The kitchen committee was commended for the attractiveness and convenience of the kitchen. Mrs. L.T. Bartholomew, Mrs. Lucille Gay, Mrs. F.D. Bissett, Mrs. Bonnie Hinton, and Mrs. Henry Brantley were on the committee.

Dr. Blackmore advised the church in the fall of 1957 that withdrawal from the North Roanoke Association should be considered for 1958. That action would place Spring Hope Church in the same association as the neighboring churches of commensurate size. This was done on August 31, 1958, so that the report of the church went to the Tar River Association in 1958.

The Nash County W.M.U. met in the local church on October 8, 1957. The local budget was increased from \$14,732.00 to \$16,066.00 for 1957-1958. The gifts to Cooperative Program were \$1,400.00. The church voted to set aside \$5,000.00 for renovation of the church, and to take \$1,500.00 from the general treasury to put in savings for future renovation programs. A committee was named to examine the church building with repair and renovation in mind. The committee was named as follows: J.T. Edwards, Navada Bissett, Lillian Morgan, Earl Cummings and P.E. Daniel. The family of Mrs. Lelia Bunn Yarborough gave \$100.00 to have her name and Mr. Yarborough's name lettered on one of the stained glass windows.

The Blackmores were blessed with a second child in 1957. John Thomas Blackmore was born. What a joy to have another baby Blackmore in the pastorium! January, 1958, began with the Baptists and Methodists joining in a church census on January 26. No record of the results of the census have been found.

The Gerald Weaver Royal Ambassadors, led by Dr. Blackmore, had



twenty-seven members. There were two definite age groups, so two chapters were formed. Dr. Blackmore took the fifteen Intermediate boys and Mrs. B.G. Morgan led the twelve Junior boys. Some good work was done by both groups. Efforts to form a Brotherhood had been made for some time without results. A date was set and a supper held in order to discuss forming a Brotherhood. Warren Brantley reported that forty-nine men were present, but no action was taken toward organizing.

The revival was held in April, 1958. Membership was increased by twenty, seventeen by baptism and three by letter. Vacation Bible School had 120 enrolled. Mrs. Lassiter resigned as organist on August 27, 1958, or rather asked for an indefinite leave of absence. The church considered paying a student \$50.00 a month to play for church, but hired Mrs. Bruce Walker (Rachel), a piano teacher, to serve as organist and Choir Director. She and her husband were living here while Mr. Walker was studying for the ministry at Wake Forest. Rachel served as organist until 1960 at which time Mrs. Lassiter was able to return.

The committee named to examine the church for repair or renovation recommended renovation and asked for a Finance Committee to raise funds. They would need to know the extent of renovation. B.G. Morgan, Chairman, F.D. Bissett, R.K. Bass, Gus Neville, and Charles Strickland were named to work on a viable goal for the cost of renovating the sanctuary and to raise funds. Plans were worked out by Conference on January 26, 1959. A goal of \$25,000.00 was set. One-half of that sum would be solicited by contribution, the other half would be borrowed.

Dr. Blackmore had a folder printed that explained the changes to be made in the sanctuary as follows:

1. To remove the partition in the Putnam Room and to replace the upswinging panel-walls with folding doors. (author's note: The Putnam Room was one of two rooms where the Morgan Chapel is today.)

2. To restore the balcony. (Note: There were three partitioned classrooms in the balcony.)

3. To replace the front walls of the sanctuary with a new wall of one large arch and two doors, to place the choir loft behind the pulpit and to have the baptistry raised in a central Gothic arch behind the choir loft. (Note: The choir loft had been in the right corner as one faced the pulpit. It was set at a 45 degree angle, elevated, and held the organ. The baptistry remained in the same location, but was elevated. It had been under the floor.)

4. To rewire with switches and dimmer. (Note: The

original chandeliers were very old [since 1910] and gave poor light. They were removed and recessed indirect lighting installed.)

5. To replace lights with four brass chandeliers and recessed ceiling lights. (See note from #4. The brass chandeliers were not placed until 1987 when they were given as memorials.)

6. To install air conditioning.

7. To re-plaster and re-paint.

8. To re-carpet. (Note: The old carpet was burgundy and was replaced with a soft green carpeting.)

Estimated Cost: \$17,050.00

It was believed that the renovation would take care of the physical needs of the church for twenty-five years or more to come.

In moving the choir loft behind the pulpit it was necessary to extend the platform forward into the body of the sanctuary. In so doing, two rows of pews were sacrificed. On either side of the platform two paneled pits were constructed for the piano and organ. At what date renovation began is not certain. The church conference met in the Fellowship Hall on April 9, 1959, because the sanctuary was being renovated.

There was a covered dish supper that night. Funds were still being gathered for renovation. Revival was announced for April 19-26, 1959, with Rev. Dewey Hobbs, of Wingate, preaching. Cottage prayer meetings were held in advance. Mrs. Bruce Walker led Vacation Bible School, June 1-5, 1959. Dr. Blackmore requested two months leave of absence to work on Dr. Cullom's biography. He had arranged for Bruce Walker, the husband of the organist, to fill the pulpit during his absence.

C.S. Mitchell gave the money to purchase an outside bulletin board in September, 1959. There would be a glass door to protect it from the weather. It was placed there in memory of Mr. Mitchell's father. Dr. Blackmore was elected Moderator for the Tar River Association. Spring Hope Church was again in Tar River Association. Spring Hope reported at the October Association, 1959, at Dunn, that there were 433 members, ten baptisms; 135 W.M.U. members, Melba Bartholomew, President; 319 students in Sunday School, Dr. A.G. Inscoe, Superintendent; sixty-two in Training Union, Rebecca Williams, Director; and one hundred in Vacation Bible School.

No local records have been located for 1960 and 1961. However, the year books and association reports have been some help. The renovation was completed while Dr. Blackmore was the pastor. The entire inside of the sanctuary was cleaned out and only a shell was there. It took quite



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## CHAPTER FIVE

# The Refining Years 1961-1975

Dr. Blackmore had resigned. No record of a Pulpit Committee was found for that year. It was discovered that Dr. Cullom had again been contacted to help in securing an interim pastor. He sent James T. Hatcher, a Seminary student, who agreed to conduct Sunday services from October through December, 1961. The Christmas music service by the choirs and the White Christmas program were held as usual. Don Smith, Chairman of Deacons, and his board led the business of the church without interruption. As a whole, for the three months interim, attendance did not drop and the numbers continued to work well. Night services were eliminated. Sunday School and worship services were held on schedule. The transition was smooth as Dr. Blackmore had wished it to be.

Through Southeastern Seminary it was learned that Rev. John A. Bracey, pastor at Double Springs Baptist Church near Shelby, might be available to fill the Spring Hope vacancy. He had served that church for six years. Upon contacting him, he showed interest. The church voted to call him to pastor the First Baptist Church in Spring Hope. He accepted and agreed to assume his duties on January 1, 1962.

### John A. Bracey, 1962-1975

Rev. John A. Bracey, lovingly called Jack, assumed his duties at Spring Hope Baptist Church on January 1, 1962. He and his wife, Wilhelmina, and children, Alice, John, Bill, David and Mary, moved into the newly readied parsonage. To greet the family the ladies of the church, under the direction of the parsonage committee, had the house and grounds in first-class condition. The children were young and well behaved. Wilhelmina was a gentle, musically talented lady who soon accepted the responsibility of both the Junior and Senior choirs. The entire family was



fond of good music and good literature. This love was reflected in projects of the church. Both Rev. and Mrs. Bracey were vitally interested in the growth and development of the young people and worked enthusiastically for progress in the work.

After getting acquainted with his flock, Rev. Bracey introduced a newsletter, "Gabriel", the first month of his ministry. It was mailed out twice a month to members to keep them informed of the activities of the church and her organizations, to make announcements, tell of important events in the lives of members, of new projects and always contained some devotional thoughts of the pastor. The "Gabriel" was approved by the church on a three months trial basis. It was so well received that the letter lived throughout the Bracey ministry. Mrs. Melba Pitts typed and mimeographed, Miss Sarah Brantley was in charge of circulation while Mr. and Mrs. Warren Brantley compiled the mailing list. Rev. Bracey's sense of humor was evident in his written word as well as the spoken word.

He was quick to resume the eliminated services during the first week of his ministry. Pre-marriage counseling sessions were held for eligible candidates. The pastor's study was locked for the first time due to the unknown theft from petty cash. The annual Cullom supper was held for all members age sixty-five or older. Rev. Bracey liked to call it the "Exclusive" supper. Training Unions, both Intermediate and Adult, were active. A new Primary Union was organized. Mrs. J.B. Weaver began mimeographing "Gabriel" in April, 1962. A new mimeograph machine had been purchased.

The sanctuary renovation indebtedness loomed before the members. \$25,000.00 had been borrowed on August 26, 1961. The note was due on February 15, 1962. It was reported that \$6,738.80 had been paid in February and at April Conference, 1962, another \$4,500.00 plus interest was paid leaving an outstanding debt of \$15,500.00. By February, 1964, the debt was cleared after setting aside special Sundays on which all offerings were designated for the church renovation debt. The last drive for funds was on Sunday, January 19, 1964, and on February 15, the note was cancelled. For the first time in some years the church did not have a debt pending.

The church voted to participate in a community church survey. This was directed by J. Parker McLendon, Associational Director of Missions. The survey revealed 147 prospective members of all ages for First Baptist Church. It indicated there was much to do.

Four new offering plates were donated anonymously in May, 1962. The church voted not to accept plaques to be placed on existing church property. In June, Mrs. Bracey organized Junior and Primary Choirs. The Youth Weekend at Meredith was attended by our Intermediate and Young

People. The Girls' Auxiliary went for a week to Meredith College to attend a camp that was sponsored by the Tar River Association. Miss Iva Edwards, leader, chaperoned. By 1964 Mrs. Bracey had organized four young people's choirs, adding Beginners and Young People. She also directed the Adult Choir. Music was outstanding in the church. The Juniors gained recognition as being the outstanding Junior Choir in this section of the state. The Young People's Choir traveled to Winston-Salem to participate in the statewide Youth Choir Festival, 1000 to 1500 participated in these meets. The Junior Choir traveled to Raleigh, Winston-Salem and Wake Forest Seminary, performing in statewide competition. All appearances were given excellent reports.

Early in 1962 a need was found in the nursery. Cribs were needed. A memorial fund was established by the E.L. Brady family for their loving wife and mother, Peggy Brady. This fund was designated to improve the nursery facilities. Three new cribs were purchased.

A comment Rev. Bracey made in "Gabriel", September, 1962 is worthy of note. He warned that "the price paid for insistence upon early maturity of our children is that the temptations and problems of adulthood will be confronted at a very early age. It would lead to setting a lower age for young people legally to buy alcoholic drinks and would hasten other social problems." How prophetic and true! In the 80's the age for purchasing alcoholic drinks was lowered from 21 to 18. At this writing the social problems of our young are numerous enough to be alarming.

From time to time throughout his ministry, Rev. Bracey led discussion groups on timely subjects. An outstanding panel discussion dealing with the history and nature of "Communism" was held in September and November, 1962. Bill Edwards, J.B. Weaver and Curtis Daniel appeared on the panel. The forums were a tremendous success.

In October, 1962, Rev. Bracey had begun to make overtures toward establishing a church library. Some years prior the family of the late Lela McNeill Privette had given books and a fund to establish a library. It did not prove successful. Now it seemed that the Sunday School teachers and others were seeking sources to aid them in their Bible studies. By November, Mrs. Ben Wood had given the first \$100.00 to get such a project started. A library committee, composed of Mrs. L.T. Bartholomew, Mrs. B.G. Morgan, and Mrs. Ben Wood was named to set up a night, November 21, 1962, on which a number of books suitable for the shelves would be brought on consignment from the Baptist Book Store for interested members to purchase. The books were selected by the committee, rules and regulations for their use made and the purchased books accessioned, catalogued and placed on the shelves. After Christmas a special day was set aside to bring books from personal libraries to be

screened by the committee. This was in order to prevent duplicates, mediocrity, and undesirables from being placed on the shelves. In January Mrs. Morgan and Mrs. Bartholomew were busy preparing the books for checkout. Mrs. Morgan was the first Librarian. By the end of the year, 1963, there were over 800 volumes in the library. Checkouts numbered 1,924; 617 of which were adult and 1,307 were children's books.

A school of Missions was held in Spring Hope in March of 1963, with a different missionary speaking each night of the week. Average attendance was 96. The same month the Association W.M.U. met in the local church.

The Director of Missions for the Tar River Association, J.Parker McLendon, resigned and Robert Latham assumed his duties.

Dr. Blackmore had the Cullom biography ready to go to press. Dr. Cullom died following several months' illness on Sunday, October 20, 1963. Dr. Blackmore had taken up professional duties at Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest. Spring Hope people were delighted to have the Blackmores close by but were deeply saddened by the loss of Dr. Cullom. Dr. Blackmore's biography was very aptly entitled *The Cullom Lantern* because the dear man had been a light in the lives of many people and one of God's lights on earth. The book went to press shortly thereafter and an autograph session was held in the Education Building on December 8, 1963.

The church roll was updated in 1964 under the leadership of Chairman Warren Brantley, Mrs. Arthur Morgan, Mrs. George Walker and R.L. Pitts. Many non-resident members were not located. Others declared their wishes to remain or to be removed. This brought the total membership to 393; 299 of whom were residents and 94 were non-residents. Also in 1964, the pews in the Putnam Room were given in loving memory of Benjamin Garland Morgan by his wife and children. Chairs had been being used, but the pews gave dignity to the room when the paneled doors were unfolded and opened into the sanctuary. Mrs. Ben Morgan gave a piano for the room in memory of her late husband. The secretary's desk, chair and the lectern were donated by Mrs. Charles Edward Morgan and her sons in memory of their late husband and father. The church subsequently named the Putnam Room the Morgan Chapel. It was originally named for Rev. D.F. Putnam who was minister when the building was erected in 1909-1910.

All the traditional functions of the church were continued such as Deacons' Suppers, the Cullom supper, revivals, Christmas and Easter Music services, and special Bible studies and discussion groups.

A Youth Director, Jim McSwain, student at the Seminary, was hired for eight weeks in the summer of 1964 to work with the various age groups in the church. In lieu of Vacation Bible School a special week of Bible

study was held. Attendance and interest were high. Mr. McLendon served as Youth Director, summer of 1965; Larry Farrell in 1966, and Charlie Kirkland in 1967. Since that time for the most part there has been a Youth Director working in the church at least part of the year.

The four youth choirs participated with the Adult Choir in the musical presentation of "The Whole World Is Singing" on December 20, 1964. There were more than eighty enrolled in the five choirs and seventy-nine participated that evening. 1964 ended with the awareness that a strong stewardship of time, talent and tithes was developing and was reflecting in the joy of service and time well spent. It also reflected in the increase in tithes and offerings.

A cement walkway leading from the front to the breezeway was poured. Wrought iron rails were placed at the rear steps. A pulpit Bible was donated anonymously. The Gardner-Webb College Choir and the Chowan College Choir appeared in the church at different times to bring inspiration through music. An area light was installed at the rear of the church. This was removed somewhat later due to the light pole being a parking hazard. Mrs. Claude Abernathy donated a punch bowl and cups to the church kitchen equipment. C.S. Mitchell gave the outside Bulletin Case at the northeast corner of the church. For some time the need for designating the church name, pastor, and service schedule had been discussed. The new case made it possible.

Coach Algie Faircloth, of the Spring Hope High School Athletic Program, spoke to the young people about his vocation. He stressed the necessary character qualities and the necessary preparation involved. Then he extolled the rewards of teaching. Mrs. Morgan resigned after three years as Librarian to assume the duties of Girls' Auxiliary Leader. She reported 1,015 volumes in the shelves at the end of 1965.

The budget for 1965-1966 was proposed and approved. This was set at \$20,000.00. The Vietnam War effort was affecting the lives and pocketbooks of people all over the United States. Spring Hope was no exception. Many of the young men and women were conscripted to serve. The cost of living was increasing, but funds were not. Many women found it necessary to leave the home and work to supplement their husband's income. Those were the days called "The Woman's Revolution." She did not revolt. She was forced by economic pressures to work. Later, though, many wives had grown used to the feel of a degree of independence and did not want to give up that freedom. As a result church and Sunday School enrollment and attendance dropped. Only for a short time did the tithes and offerings decrease. Churches in general have never recovered the number of members since the late 60's and early 70's. Another result was smaller families and fewer children, often no children among married



couples.

New choir robes were purchased. They would arrive in time for the Christmas Music Program on December 19, 1965. The Youth Choirs were using the white robes that Mrs. Bonnie Hinton had made during the Johnson ministry. Now that there were four young people's groups, more had been made. Some were made by parents, others by Mrs. George Marshbourne. All the choirs performed in vestments that night. It was pleasing not only to the ear, but to the eye as well.

A Young Men's Sunday School Class was organized by Elmo Lamm. It proved successful with Mr. Lamm as teacher until 1969 when the class was no longer needed. The members had become Sunday School teachers. Air conditioning units were placed in the upstairs classrooms of the Education Building. The Elmo Edwards Youth Camp Fund was established in 1967 as a loving memorial by the widow and two children, Myra and Steve. The interest derived from the fund was to be used for young people ages 8-15 who could not afford the cost of attending church camp for a week in the summer. For several summers this project was effected.

Mr. Robert Latham resigned as Director of Missions for the Tar River Association and Mr. Charles Burchette assumed those duties. The church received a \$1,000.00 legacy from the estate of Mrs. David Manning.

Rev. Bracey tendered his resignation in the fall of 1967 to become effective December 31, 1967. He had an opportunity to work with a new church where there were a lot of young people. He accepted the call to Immanuel Baptist Church (now Pfafftown) near Winston-Salem to begin January 1, 1968. The church agreed reluctantly to giving up the Braceys to Pfafftown, but felt that he must do God's work where he was called. Now a Pulpit Committee and plans for the future must be made. In the meantime while they were still with Spring Hope Baptists, they continued to work. In December, the choirs of both Baptist and Methodist churches united to perform the Christmas Music Program. This was a beautiful example of the rapport that had been developed during Rev. Bracey's ministry. Some Bible Schools were held jointly, exchange of pastors from time to time, surveys, young people's work shared.

Now that the Braceys would be leaving, one looked back over the past six years and realized that there had been a marked spiritual growth, growth in individual participation and growth in stewardship of tithes and offerings. Rev. Bracey had stressed from the outset of his work in Spring Hope that each one should do all he could in his individual capacity to strengthen the church. He had also stressed from time to time quiet meditation in the sanctuary. A bad habit among some members had developed along the way and Rev. Bracey noted this habit early in his ministry here. He noticed much unnecessary talking in the sanctuary before



and during the Prelude. Some members seemed to try to catch up on their visiting at this time in the service. He let them know in a modest way how irreverent it was and how annoying to others. It displeased him so from time to time he called attention to it. In his last "Gabriel" in December, 1967, he wrote,

Let me share something with you. Two groups of recent visitors have remarked to me about how impressed they were by the reverent atmosphere they sensed even before the organist began the Prelude and all during the service. This is something you and I take for granted, but I thought you might be interested to know that visitors notice this. They not only notice, they are helped by it.

This is one indication of the spiritual atmosphere he helped the members create.

In looking back, Mrs. Bracey had built up and strengthened the love of music in the church. She had done this efficiently and willingly with superior results. There are adults in the church today in whom she instilled this love and who were influenced by her talent and personality. Like his wife, Rev. Bracey was fond of good classical music and would linger long in a member's home to hear Beethoven or Bach records, perhaps borrow them to listen more and he really listened. Likewise good literature was important to him. His smile was infectious and he had a quite boyish grin when he knew something special. He was a tease and was easy to love. The Bracey children were also easy to love. With a gentle, loving mother and a strict but fun-loving father, they were well behaved and active in the church and community. The entire family was a blessing to all who knew them, but now it was time to say goodbye. The church must look to the future for a minister.

A Pulpit Committee was named as follows: Mrs. Gus Neville, Rex Stevens, Don Smith, M.V. Parrish and Mrs. Alfred May with Mrs. Earl Purkerson and Ed Brady serving as alternates. The church voted to invite Dr. Leo Greene, Professor at Southeastern Seminary, Wake Forest, to supply as interim pastor. He agreed. The work of the church was carried on ably under the guidance of the Deacons and the Trustees until a resident pastor could be found.

The statistics which the Pulpit Committee needed read as follows: pastor's base annual salary, \$6,600.00; membership, 371; Sunday School, 239; a Music Ministry; a Library; a W.M.U.; contributions, \$21,316.00; expenditures, \$16,036.00; Cooperative Program, \$2,800.00. The committee visited many pastors seeking just the right one.

## John R. Link, 1968-1972

Finally in April, 1968, Rev. John R. Link, pastor of Warrenton Baptist Church, Warrenton, N.C., accepted the call to the Spring Hope ministry to be effective June 1, 1968, with the understanding that within five years he would be eligible to retire. Dr. Greene consented to continue as interim pastor through the month of May.

Rev. Link preached his first sermon to the Spring Hope Church on the first Sunday in June, 1968. Some members remembered his having led revival services in their church in June, 1944, during Rev. Johnson's pastorate. The goal for Link's ministry was to encourage the members to give diligence to everyday living, to resolve to discipline themselves to Christ, to get about doing the business of God's work and to keep the joy and praise of God. Mrs. Link, an accomplished musician, agreed to direct the music program. She and Rev. Link were experienced in many years of church service. Their previous activities had recommended them for the position at Spring Hope. They had raised their children who were already married or out on their own. The parsonage had been painted and minor repairs made to insure the Links' comfort. After moving from Warrenton, they immediately assumed their duties in the church. The members held a reception for them in July, 1968.

Rev. Link encouraged the young people. From time to time he led them to take charge of morning worship. He invited the youth from Warrenton Baptist to be in charge of the first young people's service to illustrate how to carry out the program effectively. He was eager to meet with parents of the college students. He always encouraged serious Bible study by all ages and frequently held study courses. Miss Jerri Wheless assisted in preparing the weekly bulletins. Mrs. Mildred Manning and Miss Sarah Brantley helped to type and circulate the newsletter every two weeks.

The work of the church was running smoothly, but in August, 1969, after thirty-four years as faithful organist, Mrs. G.C. Lassiter tendered her resignation. She had been so efficient and was so talented that her loss would be keenly felt for a long time. The resignation was effective on September 30, 1969. Her willing readiness to perform her duties never faltered. Incidentally, she had received very small remuneration which she always gave back to the treasury or bought music for the church. The members had felt secure in her service. Where would another so faithful and talented be found? For several months, Mrs. Bruce Walker (Rachel), music teacher and wife of a Baptist minister, who had supplied the local pulpit on occasion, played for services. Then Miss Jennifer Bass, student, agreed to become organist at \$40.00 per month. She served for a year.

At the rear of the church building there was a problem with non-attendees parking cars during services. It was felt that speaking to the culprits would eliminate the problem. Discussion led to the awareness that more parking area was needed. Perhaps the Jenkins' property south of the Education Building could be purchased. More discussion agreed that parking space was needed but that renovating the Sunday School quarters was a more pressing need. Don Smith, Chairman of the Board of Deacons, was designated to investigate the necessary changes. Later he reported that an advisor from the N.C. Baptist Sunday School Board had studied the facilities and had drawn up suggestions for the work. A renovation committee was named as follows: E.C. Daniel, Carl Banks, Mrs. R.T. Geddie and J.B. Weaver.

Good work was done during 1969-1970. Funds for renovation increased slowly. There was \$4,419.93 in that fund and \$8,340.08 in the Expansion Fund. It was necessary to borrow \$2,500.00 to cover the cost of renovating. The wall between the movie projection room and Mrs. Parrish's Sunday School class was removed, also a door. This made the Parrish room large enough to accommodate the large class. Besides, the projection room was rarely used and could be put to better use. Two small classrooms downstairs, where the pastor's study is today, were made into one and a door removed. A men's toilet was installed to the left of the stage. The former men's toilet was converted into a ladies' facility. Prior to the change no ladies' toilet had been on first floor. Upstairs in the Primary classroom the wall of the closet, sink, and utility room was removed, a hot water system installed in the kitchen, a closet built in the kitchen hall, more shelves provided for the library, two air conditioning window units were placed in the Assembly room and the inside and outside of the building was painted where necessary. By September, 1970, the project was complete. Treasurer J.B. Weaver reported the cost at \$11,583.00.

The Sunday School enrollment was revised in 1971 under the direction of Ed Brady, Superintendent. Mrs. Bruce White, Mrs. Elmo Edwards and Mrs. C.H. Brogden were named to contact non-attending members. Many names were dropped.

Jennifer Bass gave up her duties as organist in 1971. Mrs. Alice Mabe, of Rolesville, served that post in May and June, but found the travel difficult, so resigned. During the summer months Mrs. Ted Bissett, Mrs. Link, Mary Morgan and Marsha Manning alternated Sundays in playing. David Morgan, who had studied pipe organ while in college, had returned to the community to live. He agreed to be the regular organist in the fall, 1971, at first at no salary, but later at \$40.00 per month.

Mr. Link led the church to publish its first pictorial directory of members in 1970 and on July 8, 1970, it was reported at church

conference that Mrs. Melba Gaskins Pitts and Robert Lee Pitts, Jr. had presented a music trust fund of \$1,000.00 in loving memory of Robert Lee Pitts, Sr. and Mrs. Clyde MacNair Pitts. This fund was designated to be used in the Youth Music Program as a scholarship. To administer the disbursement of such fund it was requested that a committee be named that would be comprised of the Choir Director, the Organist, the Chairman of Deacons, the Pastor and a member-at-large. Mr. Pitts, Sr. had served the church for fifty years in responsible capacities, as Deacon, Clerk, Treasurer and Trustee. Mrs. Pitts had served faithfully in the music program. She had taught piano to most of the young people of the church. The scholarship was awarded in 1971 to Nancy Williams, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Williams to study organ for the summer. Sherri Brantley, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Warren Brantley, received the scholarship for organ study in 1972.

Rev. Link set aside a Sunday in February, 1971 to designate the offering to be applied to the note at First Citizens Bank for money borrowed to renovate. More than enough was received to retire the note. Repairs to the pastorium basement were made and the home was painted.

Rev. and Mrs. Link held open house at the parsonage in December, 1969 and 1970. Guests were impressed with the ornaments on the Link Christmas tree. They were Christmons, symbols of Christ and Christianity, made of white styrofoam and decorated with various gold trims. The ladies thought that was a good idea for the Christmas tree at the church. Mrs. Link agreed to direct the making of the Christmons provided the ladies would help. This they did and the first Christmon tree was placed in the Assembly Hall in December, 1977. It was very beautiful and inspiring. Mrs. Link explained the meaning of each symbol. The following December, 1972, Mr. Geddie asked that the Christmon tree be placed in the sanctuary. It was done and has become a tradition.

Mrs. Link was busy at the same time leading the Junior and Adult Choirs in preparation for special music for Christmas as well as special numbers for regular worship services. She was also very active in the work of the Missionary Society, bringing new ideas and helping to complete projects.

The Edwards Camp Fund sponsored four girls and one boy to go to Camp Willow Run in 1971 and sponsored ten boys and one girl for a week in 1972. Four Junior Choir Boys attended Music Camp at the N.C. Baptist Assembly, also Joan Baker under the sponsorship of Pitts Music Fund in 1971. Ed Brady chaperoned.

The church voted to lock the doors of the Education and Church Buildings when not in use. Insurance companies could cancel the policies if buildings were not locked. There had been some vandalism and theft in the



Education Building during the Bracey ministry. Locks had then been placed on the kitchen, the pastor's study, and the library. New working locks were placed on all outside doors under the supervision of Earl Purkerson. Two file cabinets were purchased to store financial records. Robert Latham resigned as Association Director of Missions. Mr. Charles Burchette assumed his duties in 1972. The Youth Bell Choir from Kinston Baptist gave a concert in April, 1972. The local W.M.U. served lunch for them in the Assembly Hall. The choir performance was an inspiration and probably influenced the establishment of a Bell Choir at Spring Hope Baptist Church at a later date.

It was recommended on April 24, 1972, that the church attempt to buy the Jenkins' property on Walnut Street, south of the Education Building. J.M. Wood, Alfred Wheless, Mrs. Earl Purkerson, Joe Woodard and Mrs. Willard Pace were named to investigate. The committee reported in August that Mrs. Jenkins would sell with a lifetime right to stay in her house. Since the church wanted the space for parking, her proposal was declined. It was felt that at some future date the property would be available without any restrictions.

Rev. Link always emphasized improvement of the work with the youth of the church. He worked especially diligently in 1972. They studied the Book of Job, led church services, the Junior Choir performed frequently, and in August and September, Rev. Link planned and executed a witnessing program for the Junior and Adult Sunday School classes. He encouraged use of the Youth Music and Youth Camp Funds. He secured Mrs. N.H. Finch to teach a Bible class for youth for a week.

Early in 1972 Rev. Link had reminded the Deacons that he had planned to resign at the end of 1972. It was necessary for them to be thinking about a new pastor because time was drawing near. On September 24 he submitted his resignation to the Board of Deacons at their regular meeting. The typed request for a reduced work load relationship with the church for the next four months included the statement: "I prepare for full retirement on December 31, 1972." It came as no surprise for he had accepted the local position with the understanding that he would soon be retiring. With the request of one-half duty, he proposed:

"1. Planning the future program of the church; 2. Forming a church council; 3. Getting a church constitution written and adopted."

He suggested having laymen lead the midweek services, and to have the Sunday evening hour used for a variety of activities rather than preaching services. Sunday night services were actually discontinued until a new pastor was hired. Link said his pastoral duties where needed would not be



reduced. In requesting more free time, he voluntarily asked that his salary be reduced accordingly to one-half if the terms were acceptable. The terms were agreed upon and he continued as advisor until his designated term was complete.

Rev. Link needed more free time to complete renovation of the dwelling which he and Mrs. Link had bought for retirement. He also wanted more time to write. He had already published some books. (See his biography). Mrs. Link would remain an employee of the church as Music Director and would receive the same health coverage as such. Both wanted the transition to a new ministry to take place smoothly.

In the fall of 1972 the Year Books were compiled and distributed as usual. The Deacons would follow the established programs for 1972-1973 as nearly as possible. The pastor would plan the already scheduled revival for April, 1973. The 1972-1973 report to the Association meeting at Castalia, October 16, 1973, named the new officers. This report was made by the church clerk, Mrs. Bruce White. She reported 248 members of whom seventy were non-residents. Sunday School Director, Clyde Best; Treasurer, J.B. Weaver; Choir Director, Mrs. John Link; Organist, David Morgan; Chairman of Deacons, Ed Brady; Chairman of Trustees, Mrs. Willard Pace. W.M.U. President, Mrs. Zeb Jones; Budget, \$23,966.00; Cooperative Program, \$3,000.00; Pastor's salary, \$6,000.00.

Upon retirement in December, Rev. Link stated that he had feelings of regret and joy about ending his formal ministry. He had enjoyed the relationships, especially the faithfulness of the Board of Deacons with whom he had worked closely, and he looked forward with joy to retirement right in Spring Hope. There was regret that he was formally leaving the ministry and the service which he had performed willingly and lovingly while receiving compensation. Then he offered his pastoral services to the church and community as a friend. Rev. and Mrs. Link moved into their home at 22 East Second Street.

### **James B. Hopper, 1973-1975**

M.V. Parrish, Alex Greene, Mrs. Julian Warren, Mrs. R.B. White and David Bissette were named to serve on the Pulpit Committee with Tommy May and Roland Geddie serving as alternates. They had been working toward securing a new pastor since October, 1972. Rev. James B. Hopper, pastor of Villa Heights Baptist Church, Roanoke, Va., was called to preach a trial sermon on February 28, 1973. A business session was called after service and the Spring Hope Church voted to extend the call to him. He needed to give his people in Roanoke thirty days notice and agreed to begin his ministry locally on April 10, 1973.

A reception to honor Rev. and Mrs. Link upon his retirement was

given in March, 1973. The W.M.U. made the plans and prepared for it. They were presented a \$1,000.00 gift of money from the church. A new kitchen range was purchased by the church for the pastorium in March and the house had been painted and repaired. The trustees worked long and hard to make it comfortable and attractive to receive the Hopper family.

The Hoppers moved from Roanoke early in May. There was his wife, Wilma, and three small children, Elizabeth Ann, 6, Daphne, 4, and Marcus, age 3. While they were getting settled, the pastor lost no time in continuing the newsletter which he called "The Letter", sending it out weekly. Mrs. Jake Hawks coordinated and typed while Miss Sarah Brantley and Mrs. Henry Brantley assisted in preparing the letter for circulation. A mimeograph machine had been in use but was no longer producing satisfactory images. The *Spring Hope Enterprise* was employed to print the newsletter and the Sunday bulletins. A new IBM electric typewriter and addressograph were purchased in August, 1973. Mrs. Hawks was hired by the church to help the pastor with clerical work. The *Enterprise* continued to print the Sunday bulletins. The tape ministry for the homebound was started.

The Sunday evening worship service was resumed on May 6, 1973, at which time a Fellowship Supper was held to welcome the Hoppers. Barbecue and slaw were provided by the church. The sanctuary was cleaned and the insurance on all properties was increased from 80% to 90% coverage. The carpet in the Assembly Hall was cleaned. The Junior Choir completed the school year, spring 1973, with a Mother's Day program under the direction of Mrs. Link.

Rev. Hopper asked that church conference be held monthly rather than quarterly. This was done. Mrs. Hopper became active in the choir and led the Young Woman's Auxiliary to the W.M.U. With small children she was unable to participate as fully as she would have liked. She was very capable and did what she could quite well.

In the summer of 1973, David Morgan, organist, had his left forefinger severed accidentally so that he had to give up his organ duties. His salary was \$40.00 a month. He played at first without remuneration. After his resignation he recommended that the church pay an organist a more substantial sum in order to make the position attractive to a well qualified person. The salary was set in the budget for 1974 at \$1,500.00 annually. It was not until April, 1974, that a full time organist was hired. Ron Taylor, of Middlesex, and Choral Director at Southern Nash Senior High School, accepted the responsibility. In the interim Mrs. Ted Bissett, Mary Morgan and Marsha Manning played for services. In August, 1973, Miss Jaclynn Dabagian, Seminary student, accepted the position for a short time, but found the travel too time consuming. Mrs. Ashby Inscoe

was serving as Chairman of the Music Committee.

The budget for 1973-1974 reached \$28,560.28. For the first time on record a counting committee was named by the pastor to count the offerings before recording. Those appointed were C.G. Frazier, Alfred Wheless, Don Smith, Ed Williams and Derby Daniel.

Due to a national fuel shortage all use of the Education Building except for Sunday School on Sunday mornings was discontinued. Sunday night worship services were discontinued in December, 1973. Prayer meeting was held in the Morgan Chapel since that area could be heated separately. All other meetings were scheduled in the homes. The energy crisis was acute. Later in 1974 it was decided to heat the Education Building every other Wednesday night. A nativity scene was placed at the northeast corner of the church for the Christmas season, 1973. Miss Annie Brantley left a \$1,000.00 legacy in her will to First Baptist Church.

Rev. Hopper placed much emphasis on church life. Often he reminded members that their duties included winning new members, emphasizing discipleship, and strong support for the youth programs. He assigned each member to be under the watchcare of a particular Deacon, so that every one had a personal Deacon. This practice continues today. A committee was named in 1974 to revise the Constitution and By-Laws as follows: M.V. Parrish, Ed Brady, Mrs. Don Smith, Mrs. Bruce White and Mrs. Julian Warren with Rev. Hopper and Rev. Link as advisors. Mrs. Jake Hawks found it necessary to give up the clerical work as the pastor's secretary. Mrs. Clyde Best assumed her duties. The outside light which had been placed on a pole at the rear of the church was removed, affording a few more parking spaces. Paving the area was considered, but it was decided to spread gravel instead.

A second cassette tape player for the tape ministry was needed and purchased. The response of homebound members had been greater than expected. By July, 1974, attendance at Sunday School had dropped considerably as had attendance at church conference. Rev. Hopper expressed his concern for the apathy and indifference displayed by members. Only sixteen were present at the April business conference. He established the Saturday morning prayer breakfast at the Country Inn on Saturday mornings. That practice has been continued until the present time.

It was noted in October, 1974, that the interior of the sanctuary needed painting. Brewer's Paint and Wallpaper Company of Rocky Mount was engaged to paint the ceilings, walls and woodwork at a cost of \$3,986.00. The exterior of both the sanctuary and the Education Building were painted by a local painter, Roland Hughes. Overtures were made to connect the organ with the organ sound system. A sound system for the

hard of hearing had been proposed during Mr. Link's ministry, but no action was taken. At this time in October, 1974, it was again discussed. Rev. Hopper had suggested in April, 1983 that a system could be installed in the organ chamber where sound was already evenly distributed. He brought a sound system from the school to try. Those hard of hearing said it helped, but no action was taken.

New locks were installed for the side doors of both buildings. There were too many unlocated keys for the former locks. Mrs. Ben Wood gave cushions for the pews in the sanctuary in June, 1975. This gift enhanced the beauty as well as the comfort of the church interior. The following month, July, a Director of Youth Activities was called for a six months' trial period. Brad Owens and his wife, Lorri, were paid \$65.00 per week for their services. He was a Seminary student. Mrs. Donna Best, church secretary, had decided to go back to college and asked to be released from her duties in August. Mrs. Art Stallings assumed her duties at that time.

Two air conditioning window units were purchased for upstairs Sunday School classrooms. A sound system was being investigated for the sanctuary by the Music Committee. The Board of Deacons voted on March 24, 1975, to ask the Music Committee to contact an organ repairman to give a fair evaluation of the organ and its condition. Mr. Parrish was chosen to contact the committee on which Mrs. A.G. Inscoe, Chairman, Mrs. John Link, Mrs. G.C. Lassiter, Mrs. Ted Bissett and Mrs. Julian Warren served. Later at the August 4 meeting of the Deacons Parrish reported that there was no report as yet about the organ. He was asked to contact the music group again. Their proposal was dated August 15, 1975. It stated:

The Music Committee proposes that we proceed with making plans to acquire a new organ. Whereas, our present organ was bought in 1940 (actually 1937), and has outlived the life expectancy of an instrument of its kind and has given considerable trouble, the Music Committee feels that we need a new organ that is worthy of our music program. Therefore, we recommend that a fund be set up as a \$5,000.00 budgeted item, leaving the balance open to individual and other contributions. The Music Committee has appointed a committee composed of Mrs. G.C. Lassiter, Mrs. John Link and Mrs. Ron Taylor to look into the price and type of instrument we would like to acquire.

Mrs. A.G. Inscoe, Chairman,  
Mrs. John Link  
Mrs. G.C. Lassiter



Mrs. Ted Bissett  
Mrs. Julian Warren

August 15, 1975

Originally the Deacons had asked the committee to contact an organ repairman to give a fair evaluation of the condition of the organ and the cost and possibility of having it repaired. The Board voted again on August 29, 1975 to have the committee check on repairs as originally instructed. The final report was that the organ was so old and dated that it would be extremely difficult to find parts for it and that the condition of the organ would deteriorate even more as time passed. The church voted in October to proceed with the plans to acquire a new organ under the proposal of August 15, 1975.

Mrs. Howard Douglas gave fifty new Baptist Hymnals to the sanctuary. The film projector, given to the church during Rev. Faulk's pastorate, was used frequently, more often than in the past. It was used for study courses, missionary programs and full length movies on Christian subjects which were approved by the Southern Baptist Convention.

A Constitution and By-Laws Committee had been named as follows in July, 1974: M.V. Parrish, Ed Brady, Mrs. Drake Smith, Mrs. Rotha White, and Mrs. Maxine Warren. Rev. Hopper and Rev. John Link were named as Advisors. Mrs. Warren was made Chairman in September, 1974. There was confusion in the N.C. Baptist Convention over the ritual of immersion requirements, whether a candidate for membership under certain conditions would be required to be immersed or to be accepted as an already professed Christian. This caused delay in the work of the local committee on the Constitution and By-Laws. It was not until October, 1975, that Mrs. Warren, Chairman, reported that the First Baptist Church Constitution and By-Laws with revisions were typed and ready to be approved by the church. Approval followed.

In the meantime Rev. Hopper had resigned to the Board of Deacons on August 25, 1975, and to the church on August 31, 1975. His resignation would go into effect October 1, 1975. He had received a call to minister to Lee Street Baptist Church in Danville, Virginia, and he wished to accept the call. With regret his resignation was accepted with the statement that "he has been called by God and we could not go against His wishes." Hopper had worked hard for and with First Baptist in Spring Hope. He visited with his members frequently especially the needier, whether sick or not. Wilma had worked faithfully in the Choir and the Missionary Society. Both had contributed quite a lot to the spiritual strength of the church.

Two of the Hopper children, Daphne and Beth, had become Christians while in Spring Hope. Daphne was so small that a couple of



cinder blocks had to be placed on the baptistry steps with a board spanning from one side to the other in order to make her high enough to see through the glass window of the baptistry.

From April 10, 1973, through September 30, 1975, Rev. Hopper had led the church in positive ways. The biweekly newsletter, "Gabriel", that Rev. Bracey started in 1962, was published weekly in 1973 as "The Letter". That practice continues. The Saturday Morning Prayer Breakfast for the men was organized. It first met at the church with C.G. Frazier, Jake Hawks, Therman Edwards, Ed Brady and Rev. Hopper attending. Later the group moved its meetings to the Country Inn. The Prayer Breakfast continues to meet on Saturday mornings at the Country Inn. The tape ministry, started in 1973, is flourishing today. An Around-the-Clock Prayer Vigil on the Day of Fasting and Prayer for the Nation was held at the church in 1975. Rev. Hopper and Therman Edwards kept the "graveyard shift" from 2:00 to 6:00 a.m. Various members of the church watched and prayed at hourly intervals throughout the twenty-four hours. The first hired Youth Directors, Brad and Lorri Owens, came to the church in 1975. Today they live in Raleigh and have five children. The salaried Youth Director still works with the young people today. The Deacons watchcare system was begun while Rev. Hopper served the church. That system is still in effect today. The pastor continued pressing for a sound system for the hard of hearing, greater spirituality among the members, and much visiting among his flock. They have many good things to cherish from the nearly eighteen months that he spent working with and for their church. It was with love and regret that a parting gift of cash was given to the Hoppers by the church. It was a sense of loss to see them go. They moved away from Spring Hope in the fall of 1975.

Now it was time to name a Pulpit Committee. Statistics would be needed as they searched for a new pastor. The Association report, October, 1975, gives some facts concerning the work of the church for 1974-1975 and some of its key leaders. It follows: "Members, 241; Budget, \$39,-035.00; pastor's salary, \$9,000.00; Chairman of Deacons, J.T. Edwards; Chairman of Trustees, Mrs. Hazel Little; Treasurer, J.B. Weaver; clerk, Mrs. Bruce White; Librarian, Miss Mary B. Wheless; Tape Ministry Coordinator, Mrs. Glen Edwards; W.M.U. President, Mrs. John Link; Vacation Bible School, the Pastor; Sunday School Director, Ed Williams."

The Pulpit Committee was named: Earl Purkerson, Mrs. N.W. Beddingfield, Ted Bissett, Curtis Daniel, Ed Brady, Mrs. Bruce White and Therman Edwards. They were able to get Dr. Leo Greene, Professor at the Southeastern Seminary at Wake Forest, to agree to supply the pulpit at a salary of \$100.00 per week. When he could not be present the church voted to pay a visiting preacher \$50.00 per week to fill the pulpit.

The Deacons: J.T. Edwards, Tommy May, Mrs. N.W. Beddingfield, C.G. Frazier, Mrs. Don Smith, Jason Hawks, Alex Greene, Clyde Best, and Mrs. J.C. Womble along with the Trustees: Mrs. Robert Little, Earl Purkerson, Carl Banks, Mrs. F.D. Bissett, and Richard Williams, were doing an excellent work in keeping the affairs of the church running smoothly. Mrs. Art Stallings, church secretary, agreed to get the Year Books printed. The Deacons and Trustees gathered the information. When printed, the Deacons distributed them to the members. They took care of maintenance and repairs, so that church activities were carried on at a normal pace.

Dr. Greene served well the three months, October through December, 1975, missing only two Sundays. Rev. Link spoke one Sunday in November and Rev. Albert Lamm, retired, spoke once in October. Dr. Blackmore preached three times in January, 1976, once in February, once in March and all of April. Dr. Greene came on the Sundays not named. Due to the Trustees and Deacons the work of the church in its physical sense continued, but the members needed full time spiritual support. Attendance dropped and as a result tithes and offerings dropped.

It should be noted here that the economy of 1976 had improved generally. More women were working outside the home than ever and showed no tendency to return to their full time home duties. Many families were two-income families. Gifts to the church were increasing, but the attendance was not. The town of Spring Hope itself had not grown in population. At the turn of the century there were more children than adults. Today there are more adults than children and most of the adults attending church activities are senior adults. Where there are children, parents themselves do not attend, therefore the children feel no urgency to do so. A new spiritual awakening would be welcome and necessary to keep the true spirit of the gospel alive. Those who were loyal worked in earnest with much dedication.

Since Rev. Hopper's resignation much work was done to get the pastorium ready for new occupants. Brewer's of Rocky Mount painted the house inside and the trim on the outside for \$1189.00. Storm windows and doors were installed. The yard was re-seeded and the shrubbery pruned. All was in readiness for the new family when a pastor could be found.

The hymn books in the sanctuary were all alike, but some were new and some were old but useful. The Music Committee recommended in February, 1976, the purchase of 135 vinyl covers so that all would present a uniform appearance. This was approved and accomplished. There were some projects that had not been completed. The purchase of the new organ had not happened, but the committee was working toward selection of the best type to suit the church and also investigating sound systems for use in

the sanctuary. The Constitution and By-Laws were ready but had not been approved by the church body. Sunday night services had been eliminated during the search for a full time preacher. The Pulpit Committee was still searching. Brad Owens' six months trial period had ended as Youth Director. He and his wife were asked to continue to serve with Advisors, Jean Womble and Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Best.

Dr. Greene had served the church well as interim pastor.

State of North Carolina }  
Nash County }

J. H. Hunter  
To  
Deacons of  
Springhope  
M. B. Church

This Deed made by J. H. Hunter of the one part, to J. B. Sullivan, Spencer W. Wheelers and Henry B. Durrell, Witnesses, that she said J. H. Hunter for and in consideration of the sum of one dollar, The receipt whereof is acknowledged both bargain and sold and by these presents, both transfer and convey to the said J. B. Sullivan, Spencer W. Wheelers and Henry B. Durrell, deacons of the Springhope Baptist Church and their successors in office, the following real property viz. Lots N 23, 24 & 25, in the survey of the Town of Springhope, as recorded in Book 73 at page 474. Register's Office, Nash County to which reference is had & described as follows. Viz. Beginning at a stake corner of bark and Walnut streets and runs with Nash Street S. 47 1/2° W. 141 feet to stake on alley, thence with said Alley S. 43 1/2° E. to a stake in Bridge alley, thence with Bridge Alley S. 47 1/2° E. 141 feet to stake on Walnut street, thence with Walnut street 141 feet to beginning to have and to hold said lands to the said John B. Sullivan, Spencer W. Wheelers & Henry B. Durrell and their successors in office upon the following uses, and more over, that is to say they shall hold the same free from all liens which, accrued by mechanics, laborers, or their own obligations and shall have perpetual succession so long as the same shall be used for service of the Springhope Baptist Church. Provided however that whenever said lands shall not be used for the purposes herein specified it shall go in fee simple to B. H. Bunn & his heirs and assigns, as I held the same in trust for him. Witness my hand and seal, this 31<sup>st</sup> day of December 1894.

J. H. Hunter

J. H. Hunter (and)

North Carolina }  
Nash County }

Jan'y 1<sup>st</sup> 1895,  
The execution of the foregoing deed was duly proved before me by B. H. Bunn the witness thereto. Let the deed and the certificate be registered.

M. B. Williford  
Clerk Sup. Court

Filed for registration Jan'y 8<sup>th</sup> 1895.  
J. H. Baker  
Reg. Deeds



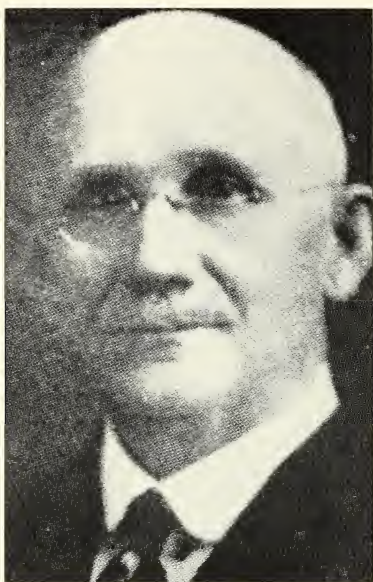


First Baptist Church, erected 1909-1910.



The Rev. D. F. Putnum  
Pastor  
1909-1911





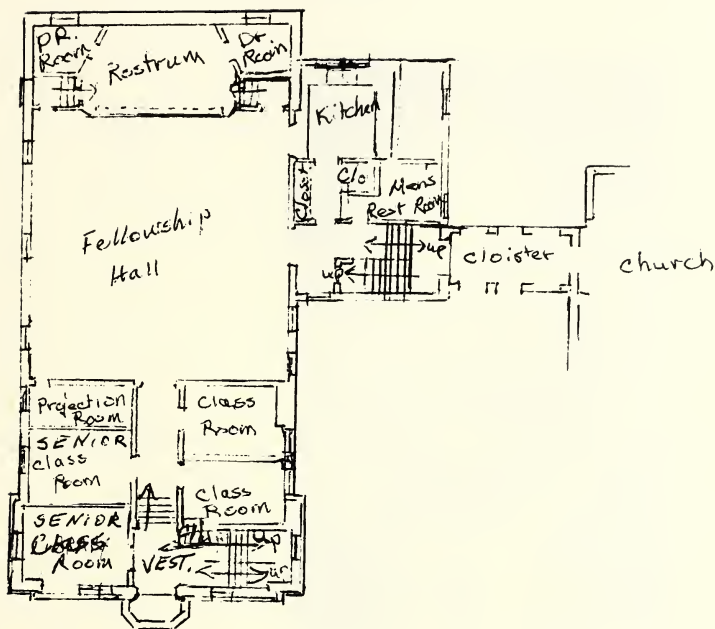
Dr. W. R. Cullom  
Pastor, 1929-1941



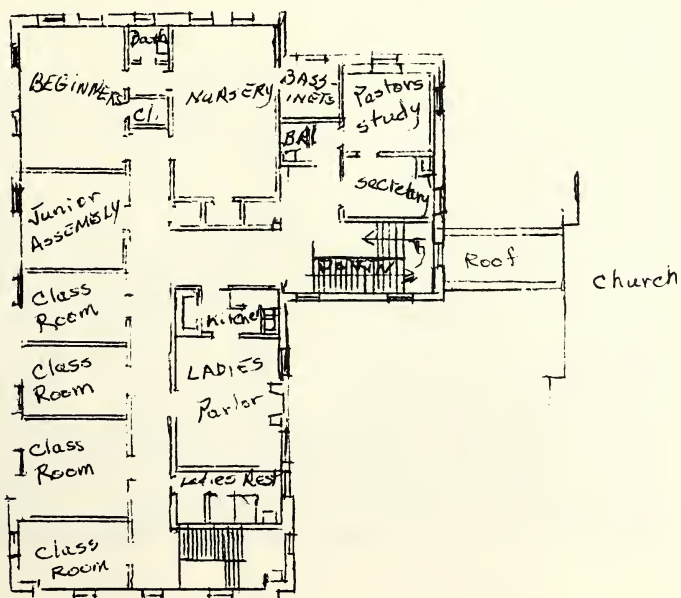
The Rev. Harold L. Hawkins  
Pastor, 1947-1951

First Baptist Church - Educational Building, erected 1949-1950.





Ground Floor Plan - Educational Building, 1949-1950.



First Floor Plan - Educational Building, 1949-1950.

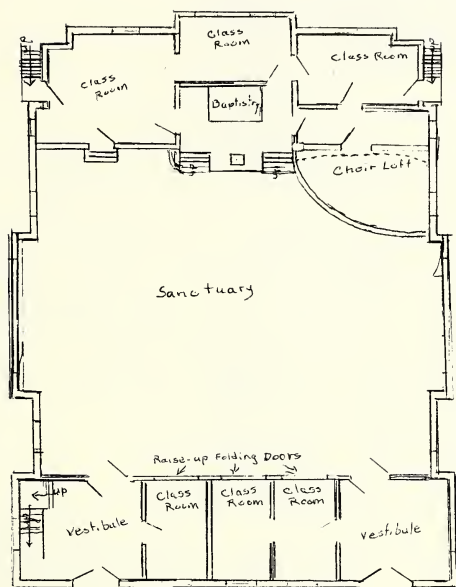




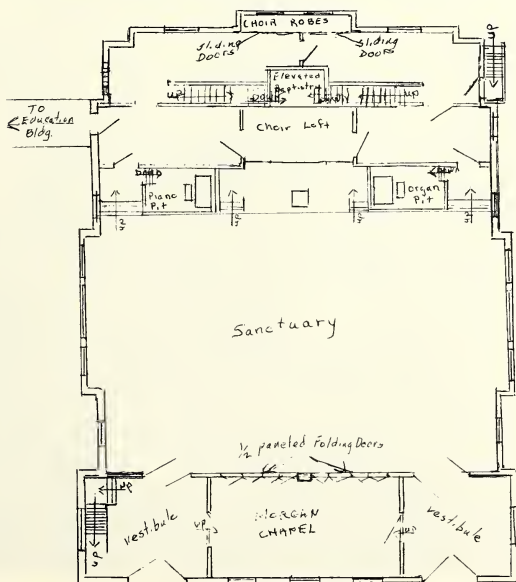
Dr. James H. Blackmore  
Pastor  
1951-1961



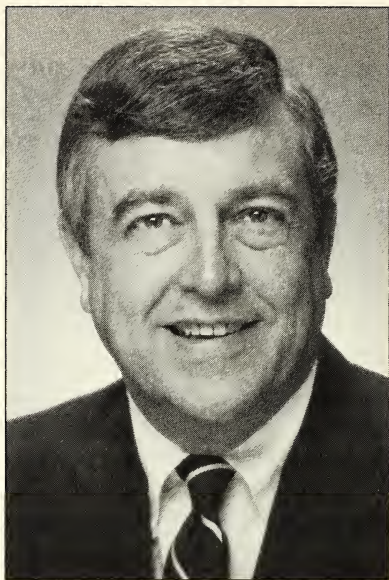
First Baptist Church Parsonage, erected 1955-1956.



Sketch of Sanctuary before renovation, 1959.



Sketch of Sanctuary after renovation, 1959.



The Rev. James W. Creech  
Pastor  
1983-Present



Stained glass window for Baptistry added 1986  
and Brass Chandeliers added 1987.





Centennial Logo - Designed by Dorothy Inscoc, 1988.

Cover Sketch by Allen Edwards

Glossy Prints and Reproduction By  
Ben Casey, Photographer



## **CHAPTER SIX**

# **The Recent Years 1976-1988**

The Pulpit Committee was having difficulty in locating a minister whom they felt suited to the position at the salary set up in the current budget. It was noted that the Contingency Fund of \$2,000.00 in the 1975-1976 budget was available. The church in conference on January 14, 1976, authorized the committee to use that fund, if necessary, as an addition to the salary set up in the budget.

The church was called into special session following the worship service on Sunday morning, March 28, 1976, following a trial sermon by Rev. Allen C. Allen, age 32, Associate Pastor of Lakeside Baptist Church, Rocky Mount, N.C. The Pulpit Committee highly recommended Allen. Discussion of salary and other remunerations followed. Rev. Allen would be continuing his education, expecting to receive his Doctorate in December, 1976. He was currently working on the required dissertation. Being impressed with Rev. Allen's delivery, mien, and text, the church voted favorably to invite him to become Pastor of Spring Hope First Baptist Church.

### **Allen C. Allen, 1976-1982**

Following his trial sermon on March 28, 1976, Mrs. Rotha White, church clerk, was instructed to extend the call to Rev. Allen in writing requesting a written acceptance indicating the date on which he expected to assume his duties in the Spring Hope Church. This she did on March 30, and on March 31, 1976, he replied:

I am pleased to respond to your letter of March 30, 1976. I accept the call to the First Baptist Church of Spring Hope with pleasure and great expectation. Terri and I feel that your

church and your community are “right” for us. I hope that we can grow together in the years before us. I will be free to assume the duties as your pastor May 2, 1976.

At last! A pastor! The Pulpit Committee had worked long and hard to find just the right person. They seemed to have succeeded in fulfilling the needs of the local church. Rev. Allen had been frank and sincere in answering the committee’s questions. His pleasing personality, neat appearance, basic background, his preparation for the ministry and his intent to continue ministerial education had great influence in calling him. The remunerations given him were acceptable to both the church and the pastor. He would receive:

Base Salary .....	\$10,000.00
Car expense .....	1,800.00
Health and Hospitalization .....	430.00
Retirement .....	1,000.00
Half of Social Security .....	580.00
Parsonage utilities except personal long distance calls .....	1,500.00
Total Remunerations .....	\$15,310.00

The Pulpit Committee had done its work thoroughly and successfully.

Rev. Allen had been ordained in his home church, Immanuel Baptist, Henderson, Kentucky, in 1967 at the age of 23. At the time the Spring Hope Church called him he was Associate Pastor at Lakeside Baptist Church in Rocky Mount. He seemed well qualified for the task at hand.

Rev. Allen, age 32, his wife, Terri, and sons Joshua, 8, and Jacob, 5, moved into the parsonage in April, 1976. Terri was an interesting, charming personality who enjoyed making a home for her family. She was a do-it-yourself addict and enjoyed working at creative things. She assumed duties right away in the organizations of the church. She became coordinator for the church nursery, Vacation Bible School Director, leader of the Katie Johnson Circle of the Woman’s Missionary Union. The tape ministry continued with her circle assuming the responsibility of getting the sermons to the homebound each week.

The pastor was charismatic. The boys made friends easily and by the end of summer, 1976, the Allens seemed like friends of long-standing. They were well received and were soon taking part in all phases of community life. Allen was continuing his studies toward a Doctorate at Southeastern Seminary. He was able to accomplish much in the contin-

uation and polishing of traditions already established and in projecting new ideas for the future of the church.

The church conference minutes, July 7, 1976, include the report of Treasurer J.B. Weaver for the April-June quarter: Receipts, \$8,648.73; Disbursements, \$8,563.74. With the balance brought forward from March 31, 1976, \$6,355.66, the current balance was \$6,440.65. The Sunday School report, given by Mrs. M.V. Parrish, listed average enrollment at 150 and average attendance at 85, this being a 56.6% attending. Mrs. Parrish had led Bible School in June. She reported 65 enrolled there with 41 in average attendance. Brad Owen, Youth Director, was meeting quarterly with the Youth Advisory Committee composed of Clyde Best, Alex Greene, and Mrs. J.C. Womble.

The church was called into conference on September 15, 1976, to elect three new deacons: Arthur Stallings, Earl Purkerson and M.V. Parrish. At the same conference Clyde Best, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, submitted for approval the slate of officers and teachers for 1976-1977. These were approved as was the new budget of \$40,895.00, which was presented by Finance Committee Chairman, Mrs. Melba Pitts.

One of the first changes Rev. Allen made was the revision of the Sunday Bulletin format. A photograph of the church on the cover had been used since Rev. Hopper came to minister in 1973. At some point Rev. Allen asked Mrs. Marian Weathers, of Rocky Mount's Walker-Ross Printing Company to do a pen and ink sketch of First Baptist Church. That sketch is being used in 1988. Mrs. Weathers at the present writing is working for the Rocky Mount Chamber of Commerce. Rev. Allen changed the format of the order of the Sunday School morning service and established the weekly newsletter. Heretofore it had been published twice monthly.

Mrs. Sarah Stallings resigned as church secretary in July, 1976. Mrs. Rose Edwards (Mrs. Kenneth) assumed those duties in August after having worked a week with Mrs. Stallings for orientation.

October came. It was the beginning of the new church year and was time to get down to the serious business of the church. The Organ Committee Chairman, Mrs. Melba Pitts, presented the following statement at the October 6, 1976, conference: "The present organ is more than thirty years old." (Actually, it was nearly forty. It was purchased in 1937 when Dr. Cullom was pastor; author's note) "Tubes cannot be replaced if they failed to work. We recommend that the church purchase a new Allen 301 organ for \$12,180.00 plus tax." Then Ron Taylor, organist, spoke knowledgeably and enthusiastically favoring the new traditional console, saying that according to experts who have examined the present organ it possibly could be repaired, but it was not feasible. The vote showed 100%



in favor of the recommendation. The committee was then empowered to purchase and have the new organ installed immediately, trading in the present organ. Financing was handled by the Finance Committee: Mrs. Earl Purkerson, Bill Edwards, Woodruff Bissette, Mrs. Melba Pitts and Bobby Little. \$3,941.34 had been accumulating in an organ fund and \$5,000.00 had been budgeted 1976-1977 for an organ. The balance was collected by individual contributions. The organ was installed right away. The account was paid in full by January, 1977, when Treasurer J.B. Weaver reported that the church was in good financial condition. All bills were paid.

Insurance coverage was increased from \$189,000.00 to \$289,000.00 on \$331,000.00 value of church properties. Annual revival was held in April, 1977, with Rev. Allen's father, Rev. Layman Allen of Henderson, Kentucky, preaching. Vacation Bible School was held in June. Rev. Allen Allen, director, reported 43 students and 13 workers were enrolled.

The Constitution and By-Laws Committee were amended to conform with the N.C. Baptist Convention Constitution and By-Laws. They were read, discussed article by article and adopted on July 6, 1977. The change pertained to the number of Trustees, their terms, rotation and expiration of respective terms — Section 3, Article III.

J.B. Weaver, Treasurer for 14 years, had served the church faithfully and extremely well. He resigned at the end of the church year, effective September 30, 1977. It was from his excellent records that much of the information presented in this account was taken. The church owes him much gratitude. He requested that his books be audited before relinquishing them to the new officer. David Morgan, local businessman and business major, was elected to fill the vacancy. He assumed the duties on October 1. The church voted to put the financial report on a calendar basis. The first quarter of the church year would coincide with the last quarter of the calendar year. Morgan reported the financial activities of the church, October through December 31, 1977, on January 4, 1978, as follows:

Contributions .....	\$10,206.38
Balance Forward .....	5,108.33
Total funds available .....	\$15,314.71
Distributions .....	\$ 6,847.51
12/31/77 Balance on hand .....	\$ 8,467.20

The 1978 Budget, \$41,859.00 was approved.

The church secretary, Rose Edwards, resigned at the end of December, 1977. Mrs. Gene Knight began in that capacity on January 1, 1978. The Association Director of Missions, Charles Burchette, resigned in October, 1977, and was replaced by Dr. W.R. McCollum. The women of

the church gave the Education Building and the church a good house-cleaning. The furnace in the sanctuary gave trouble all through the winter. It was beyond repair and needed to be replaced. At a called conference, May 21, 1978, J.T. Edwards, Trustee, stated that he had been gathering estimates of the cost of a new boiler from various firms. "A certain amount of insulation would be necessary for best results," he stated. It was also noted that the parsonage needed air conditioning and insulation. An estimate of \$3,500.00 for the sanctuary work and \$10,000.00 for the pastorium heat pumps and insulation was given. Heat pumps would take care of the heating and cooling of the pastor's home. The Trustees were authorized to secure firm bids. They were: Mrs. Rachel Weaver, J.T. Edwards, Carl Banks, Mrs. F.D. Bissett, and Richard Williams. The Expansion Fund could be used for the necessary work. At the regular quarterly conference on October 4, 1978, Mr. Edwards reported the work completed and paid as follows:

Collie Heating and Air Cond., Spring	
Hope, installed sanctuary boiler .....	\$3,380.00
Tar River Co., Louisburg, Heat pumps	
for parsonage .....	5,340.00
C.V. Banks, electrician, Spring Hope,	
rewiring parsonage .....	685.82
W.C. Weaver, Inc., Rocky Mt., blowing in	
insulation, sanctuary and parsonage .....	500.00
Total Cost .....	\$9,995.82

Spring Hope Rock Wool donated the necessary insulation for both projects. The Expansion Fund was not invaded. Solicited funds, \$1,965.00, and the General Fund were used to pay for the work.

At the same conference, October, 1978, Rev. Allen announced that an anonymous donor was offering to the church the gift of an extraordinary electronic instrument, a Schulmerich Quadrabell system. This system has the true sound of cast bells, is fully modular, ringing out the Angelus, Wedding Bells, Chimes and Hour Strikes. It also plays hymns and carols or any chosen bell music. It would be installed by Christmas if accepted. The church, of course, voted to accept this generous gift, which was put in place for the Christmas Music Service. It plays every day at noon and at five in the evening.

At the end of 1978, the budget for 1979 was approved at \$44,545.00 with appropriate increases in some areas. Cooperative Program gifts were raised from \$3,000.00 to \$4,000.00. The Treasurer recommended that \$5,000.00 from the checking account be placed in savings. This was authorized. Morgan reported:

\$ 8,934.06 in checking  
 5,039.73 in General Fund Savings  
 13,240.31 in Property Expansion Savings  
 2,357.01 in Pitts Music Fund Savings  
 \$29,571.11 total funds available.

Sunday School enrollment stood at 163, attendance at seventy-two, so Clyde Best, Superintendent, reported. Art Stallings, Deacon, and his family were moving to Florida. It was necessary to fill his office. Ted Bissett was elected to fill the unexpired term of Deacon Stallings.

Rev. Allen was concerned in January, 1979, that attendance had decreased in many areas of the church life. Tithes and offerings were thriving, but Sunday School attendance had been 50% or less of enrollment for some time. Church attendance was not at the level it should be. He urged all members to do serious thinking and praying. He stated that a spirit of ministry may be lacking and that the members needed to be very concerned over the need to improve themselves, especially about Sunday School where enrollment was 150 and attendance only sixty-six or 44%. By April, 1979, the attendance had improved to 50%.

Property insurance in April, 1979, was increased with comprehensive coverage as follows:

Sanctuary .....	\$160,000.00
Contents .....	10,000.00
Education Building .....	150,000.00
Contents .....	10,000.00
Parsonage .....	80,000.00
TOTAL .....	\$410,000.00

at an annual premium of \$815.00 with \$100.00 deductible.

The church kitchen needed new flatware. J.T. Edwards, Trustee, reported that Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Murray had donated the cost of the silver to be placed in the kitchen. Much work was done on the pastorium in 1979. Ted Bissett donated equipment and labor, Spring Hope Grocery Co., Inc. gave the paint and John Jackson of Masonite Corp. donated the use of air pumps to blast old paint from the porch floors. The garage doors were replaced, cement floors cleaned and painted, the back porch screened, roof repaired and gutters replaced. Total cost of the completed project was \$2,840.00.

Mrs. John Link represented First Baptist Church at the Southern Baptist Convention at Houston, Texas, in June, 1979, and reported the highlights of the Convention at the July Conference.

Carl Peebles, Deacon, was moving to another state. Rex Stevens was

elected to complete his term in July, 1979. At the same conference the Pastor, Deacons, and W.M.U. Director, Carolyn Sykes, recommended that fourth Sunday night in each month be set aside as a family night for supper and fellowship. This was approved to begin October 1, 1979, to continue through June, 1980. It was later decided that once a month was too often, and once a quarter was frequent enough.

Choir members were measured for new robes which were being donated by a member and his wife who wished to remain anonymous.

New officers and teachers were elected in the fall of 1979 for the church year 1979-1980. Mrs. Sarah Purkerson became W.M.U. President; new Trustees were Mrs. Elmo Edwards and C.G. Frazier; Jean Womble became a member of the Finance Committee; Mary Morgan was named Librarian with Terri Allen, assistant. The very young children's books were moved upstairs in order that they would be more accessible to the primary and pre-school classes. It also gave more room in the Library downstairs for added youth books.

During 1979-1980 a Laotian refugee family was adopted by the church and brought to Spring Hope to live on North Pine Street. The Missionary Society gathered necessary pantry supplies, clothing and toilet items. The church gave them a stove and other necessary equipment. The husband had a job, but the mother was needed at home with the small children. They did not speak English. The teenage girl, Mui Hin, attended high school and learned to speak quite well. After one and a half years they moved to Fayetteville to be nearer other refugees. Mui Hin remained in Spring Hope to complete high school. She lived with the Clyde Best family.

A handbell choir from Wilson First Baptist Church gave a concert in the local church on October 21, 1979. Ron Taylor, organist, engaged the group to come on that date. There was some interest generated for the Spring Hope Church to have such a choir.

The printing equipment in the office was giving trouble. Bulletins were being printed by Louisburg Office Supply Company in April, 1980. The church copier was inadequate. No action was taken.

Rev. Allen announced in January, 1980, that Sunday School enrollment was improving slowly. Enrollment was 137, attendance seventy-two. He noted that the teachers were good. Mrs. Ted Bissett, Sunday School Director, stated that the teachers hoped to continue to improve attendance. By the first Sunday in April she reported that there were 94 present. There had been no salaried Youth Director since Brad Owen graduated in May, 1979. Mrs. Donna Best and Mrs. Jean Womble, had worked faithfully with the young people. Both of them worked and were unable to give the program the time it deserved. Ronnie Wood agreed in July, 1980 to take the Directorship through January, 1981 at \$30.00 a



week. He would be paid from the interest derived from the General Fund money held in a certificate of deposit. After two weeks, his work took him elsewhere to live. He had to relinquish the duties of Youth Director. Phil Daley, second year seminary student, became the leader in October, 1980, at a salary of \$200.00 a month to include car expense. David Cox, another seminary student, succeeded Phil in October, 1981.

Under the leadership of Sarah Purkerson, the W.M.U. was doing outstanding mission work, although attendance was poor. The ladies had dressed twenty dolls for the Salvation Army, arranged a Christmas party for Shiloh House on Branch Street, supported Girls in Action and Acteens, purchased a sewing machine for the Laos family, made and stuffed thirty-six animals for the children's ward at Nash General Hospital, contributed clothes and canned goods for migrant workers to the Social Services Department. There were forty-five enrolled, but all of this was accomplished with an average attendance of twenty-three. There were four circles that year. Leaders were: Mrs. John Link, Mrs. Rotha White, Mrs. M.V. Parrish and Mrs. Tommy May. Mrs. Cecil Stroud was the Girls in Action leader and Mrs. Carolyn Sykes led the Acteens. The women have always been a very vital, strengthening gospel witness in the local church.

Curtains were purchased for the pastor's office in July, 1980. The Alfred Wheless estate made a gift of \$500.00 to the M.V. Parrish Men's Bible Class. The members elected to purchase new United States and new Christian flags as well as a new heater for the kitchen as a memorial to Mr. Wheless. Gifts of money were given in memory of Mrs. O.B. Baines and Mrs. S.R. May.

The church was called into session on February 18, 1981, to consider again the purchase of the Jenkins property. The Deacons had been made aware that the lot was now available. Eric Jenkins, owner, had asked \$32,000.00 for the 92 1/2' x 141' area. The Deacons were authorized to negotiate with the power to offer no more than \$25,000.00. One week later conference was called again. Mr. Jenkins would accept \$25,000.00 provided the full amount was paid in a lump sum. There was \$17,396.00 in the Property Expansion Fund on savings. To withdraw it before July would incur the loss of several hundred dollars in interest. This would make it necessary to borrow \$25,000.00 in order to pay the requested lump sum. The Trustees were authorized to borrow that amount in order that the church might cover the \$7,700.00 difference plus the amount in the Expansion Fund. Pledges would be accepted also.

The deed to the property was registered on April 16, 1981, in Nash County Deed Book 1080, pp. 871-876. It was prepared on March 9, 1981 by Henry Fisher, attorney, and deeded to Trustees Mary Edwards, C.G. Frazier, Virginia Gaskins, Jake Hawks and Bruce White for the First



Baptist Church of Spring Hope, free of all encumbrances. The house on the property was not needed. It was sold at auction on October 17, 1981, for \$400.00 to T.O. Nelms of Franklin County. He agreed to remove the house by April 1, 1982, but it was not until October, 1982 that he finally cleared the lot. After that the Trustees had grading and leveling done. A plan for parking was presented and approved that all vehicles would park perpendicular to Walnut Street.

The W.C. Delbridge family presented in February, 1981, a loving memorial for B. Cleveland Delbridge, father and grandfather. It was the original minutes of the organization meeting of Spring Hope Baptist Church and election of officers dated December 29 and December 30, 1889. The gift was given with the stipulation that it would be returned to the Delbridge family if the church ever elected to discontinue using it. This is a cherished historical fact preserved for the church. Mr. Delbridge married Madeline, the daughter of W.H. Culpepper named as an organizer in the document. The framed record hangs today in the Fellowship Hall.

The church received a legacy of \$5,000.00 by the will of William W. Speight, prominent attorney, late of Greenville, N.C., who was brought up in the local Baptist Church. The printing capability of the church office needed updating. It was proposed and voted to use some of the Speight legacy to purchase a new copier at the cost of \$2,795.00.

Rev. Allen had enlarged the size of the church directory. He re-established traditional services of the church and created an atmosphere of ease among the members. He seemed to do everything just right. For two summers, 1981 and 1982, he was involved in securing a migrant preacher, Wilfred (Willie) Luben, who preached to migrants in their own language. The migrants were permitted to use the facilities of the Education Building during the regular church worship hour in the sanctuary. Luben preached from June first through September at \$75.00 per week. This was taken from the Contingency Fund.

Rev. Allen spent one month each summer of 1981 and 1982 on Biblical Archeological Digs in Tel Dan, Israel. This was a special course sponsored by Southeastern Seminary and Hebrew Union College, New York City. He did not leave his Spring Hope flock without a shepherd. He had supply preachers lined up in advance and the work of the church never slackened.

Upon returning from a dig in Israel in August, 1982, Rev. Allen tendered his resignation as pastor of First Baptist Church, Spring Hope. He wished to end his pastorate on September 30, 1982, to accept an appointment as Chaplain to the Marine Corps Air Station at Beaufort, South Carolina. He requested that his family be permitted to live in the local parsonage until arrangements could be made for their removal to

South Carolina or until a new pastor was secured. The church agreed to give them rent and utilities free. Allen's resignation made it necessary to name a Pulpit Committee. Those serving in that capacity are as follows: Mrs. Clyde Best, Mrs. Carolyn Cale, M.V. Parrish, Ted Bissett, W.H. Crocker, with Mrs. Ann Harris and Earl Purkerson as alternates. Rev. Allen was asked to contact Dr. James H. Blackmore, former pastor, requesting that he serve as interim pastor. Dr. Blackmore agreed, being paid the usual one percent of the salary of the regular pastor, in this case \$140.00 per week, with a maximum travel expense of \$50.00 per week.

During the interim the parsonage kitchen floor was covered with new rubber tile. Formica cabinet tops were replaced. New flooring was laid in the upstairs bath and the house was painted inside and out. New carpeting, the gift of an unnamed family, had been laid in the Fellowship Hall. Mrs. F.D. Bissett, Ted and Betty Lane Bissett, had given a new refrigerator for the Education Building as a memorial to their husband and father. Ron Taylor recommended the purchase of thirty-seven handbells to create more interest among the young people. He volunteered to instruct a choir in the use of the bells. Anyone from seven years old and up was invited to join the choir. The cost of the bells would be \$3,500.00. Delivery would be made early in 1983. The Property Expansion Fund could be used and repaid if the current bills exceeded the General Fund. The recommendation was approved. The actual cost was \$3,765.00.

Mrs. Beverly Knight had resigned as church secretary in the summer of 1982. Mrs. Terri Allen did the secretary's work through October. Mrs. Gwen Walker assumed the office in November, 1982, and compiled the church Directory. The photograph of the church had graced its cover since 1973. Beginning with 1982-1983 a pen and ink sketch of the church drawn by a local young member, Allen Edwards, son of Glenn and Gerri Edwards, has been on the cover of the Directory. Phil Daley had worked with the youth, but gave up the work in the fall of 1981 — David Cox, seminary student, would continue as Youth Director, 1982-1983.

The World Hunger Fund had reached \$1,268.78 as of October 6, 1982, church minutes. The first committee for that fund was Virginia Gaskins, Betty Lane Bissett, Sarah Purkerson and Rev. Allen Allen.

While all this activity was taking place during the interim ministry, the Pulpit Committee was busy gathering statistics, interviewing and screening for a pastor. The new budget for 1983 was set at \$55,077.00. The pastor's base salary was \$14,000.00 with fringe benefits of approximately \$6,000.00; the Cooperative Program was allotted \$4,000.00 and \$1,000.00 went to Association Missions. The Contingency Fund was increased from \$1,000.00 to \$5,000.00 for items not budgeted.

When the church met in conference on January 12, 1983, a

committee was formed as an advisory board for the youth program. Dan Bissett, W.H. Crocker, and Mrs. Peggy Bissette were named to help plan youth activities and advise the Youth Director, David Cox. David Morgan, Treasurer, resigned his duties effective at the end of the quarter. He explained that business responsibilities necessitated his resignation. It was reluctantly accepted and Mrs. Sue Woodard was later elected to assume the office of Treasurer. The green piano in the Education Building, a gift of the Bayard Hollingsworth family, had never been used and the conference voted to sell it. Dr. Blackmore expressed his appreciation for being invited to serve as interim pastor. He announced his intention to write a book on his sermons in Spring Hope. This was completed in 1983. The church voted to carpet the front rooms of the parsonage.

Ted Bissett, representing the Pulpit Committee, reported that the committee had interviewed many ministers, screened some thirty prospects, and had experienced some disappointments, but they would continue to work diligently. Ten days later, James W. Creech, a graduating Southeastern Seminary student, was invited to preach at First Baptist Church on January 23, 1983. Immediately following the worship services a conference was called. Mr. Bissett stated that the Pulpit Committee unanimously recommended that Creech be hired at a base salary of \$14,500.00 plus fringe benefits. The church voted unanimously to call Mr. Creech as pastor.

### **James W. Creech, 1983**

Mr. Creech was thirty-eight years old, married, with three children, living in Wake Forest. He was a native of Blackville, S.C., had graduated in 1968 from Clemson University with a degree in forestry. He later received his Masters Degree in guidance and counseling from the University of Colorado. He had served with the U.S. Air Force in West Germany and was commissioned as an officer in a one year program in meteorology at the University of Texas in Austin. While serving his country in Panama City, Florida, he felt led to give up the Air Force duty and enter the seminary at Wake Forest. He had served twelve and a half years as an Air Weather Officer. He gave up his commission in November, 1980, and entered Southeastern Seminary in January, 1981. He would be graduating in May, 1983, with a Master of Divinity degree.

Creech later spoke of his call to Spring Hope in these words:

Since I had never preached, I was uncomfortable doing so until I completed sermon preparation and delivery. Afterwards I began supply preaching and felt definitely led into the pastorate. Prior to my graduation in May, I had prepared my resume and shared this special time of my life with other members of the Membership Committee of Wake Forest Baptist Church and

with new candidates for membership. Mrs. Ruth Blackmore was on that committee with me. On a Sunday following the sermon and invitation in Wake Forest Baptist, Ruth asked me if I would like Dr. Blackmore to take my resume to Spring Hope where he was serving as interim pastor. Naturally, I was overjoyed. God works in mysterious ways. Through our prayers and those of Spring Hope Baptists, God brought us together as pastor and church.

The following Sunday, January 30, 1983, after Mr. Creech was called, was Baptist Men's Day. The Bulletin on that day designated James W. Creech, Pastor, and James H. Blackmore, interim pastor. They were present to enjoy the Men's Day Service. Mr. Creech had visited the church as an interested listener at the annual music program in December. The Creech family came as the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Ted Bissett. Following the Men's Day Service, Tommy May, Deacon Chairman, called a church conference. He stated that since Mr. Creech had not been ordained, a committee was named to arrange his examination and ordination service. Mrs. F.D. Bissett, Bruce Walker, and Tommy May would work out the details. The date was set for March 6, 1983. The three ordained ministers who would examine him were: Dr. James H. Blackmore, former pastor, faculty member and administrative staffer at Southeastern; Dr. Chavis F. Horne, visiting professor of preaching and Chaplain at Southeastern; and Dr. W.R. McCollum, Director of Missions for the Tar River Association. Dr. Blackmore gave the charge to the church, Dr. Horne gave the charge to the candidate, and Dr. McCollum gave the ordination prayer. The rite of laying on of hands was observed. Tommy May recommended Rev. Creech to the church. The newly ordained minister was presented a Bible and an ordination certificate as tokens of the occasion. Rev. Creech pronounced the benediction. A covered dish lunch following the service was served in the Fellowship Hall.

Rev. Creech began his work in earnest on February 10, 1983. The family had moved into the parsonage at the end of graded school semester in Wake Forest and the beginning of a new school term in Spring Hope. Mrs. Creech was a teacher and would be doing some substitute teaching. The two older children, Jim and Candace, were already in school and young Dustin would enter the first grade. Now it was time to get on with the spiritual business of the church.

Creech continued the Saturday Morning Prayer Breakfast initiated by Rev. Hopper. On March 3, 1983, the newsletter stated that thirteen men had gathered each Saturday to share inspirational thoughts and prayer concerns within the church community. Wednesday evening prayer services were



resumed. The same newsletter stated that thirty-two members attended the first Wednesday meeting. Rev. Creech felt that prayer should be the foundation of the work of the church body. He stated that through prayer the individual becomes imbued with the Holy Spirit to do God's work.

By April the ordered handbells had arrived. Ron Taylor, organist, announced that the handbell choir would soon be ready to perform. Rev. Creech announced that Vacation Bible School would be held June 13-17, 1983, for children through the fifth grade. Those in grades six through twelve met June 20-24. Rev. Creech was Bible School Director. Eighty children attended.

First Baptist Church did not have a historian. Since the 100th anniversary of the church was approaching in 1989, Rev. Creech encouraged the church to consider naming a historian. He felt the need to have the church history in a concise form. Many records through the years had not been deposited at the church and were unrecovered. Mrs. B.G. Morgan was elected to research and compile the one hundred year history of the church. The Historical Research Committee of North Carolina Baptist Convention informed Mrs. Morgan that she could expect the work to take at least four years, but more likely six or more. History is a continuing process which is never ended. She began research in June, 1983.

World Hunger was stressed in June. The final report of that drive was given on September 30, 1983. It stated that \$1,511.00 was raised for that cause. Mrs. McNair Gaskins was responsible for getting that program started in First Baptist Church. In another effort to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Spring Hope, Ephesus, and Peachtree Churches joined hands for five weeks during June, July and August, 1983 to show films to the young people. The purpose of the films was to give them an alternative to television and movie films. It was agreed that the films would speak to them when other witnesses fail. Young people today are visually oriented to a greater extent than previous generations. No admission was charged and the young people attended well.

The handbells were paid for by October 12, 1983, through individual contributions. There was an excess of funds, so Tommy May, Deacon, recommended that the overage be used to start a fund to purchase a van. Undesignated memorial gifts of cash could be directed to the Van Fund until there was a sufficient amount to purchase it. The church approved the recommendation. By December, 1983, there was \$2,500.00 in the fund. A 1981 twelve-passenger van had been located. An anonymous donor offered to pay the difference in cost after the van fund was applied. Cost to the church would be \$400.00 for insurance. The church voted to accept the offer with gratitude. The van proved to be an asset, providing transportation for church affairs. Ted Bissett, W.H. Crocker, and Mrs. Peggy Creech were



elected to set rules for and to supervise the use of the vehicle.

Mrs. F.D. Bissett, member of the Finance Committee, died in October, 1983. Mrs. Rotha White was elected to fill Mrs. Bissett's unexpired term on that committee. Rev. Jack Bracey, former pastor of Spring Hope Baptist, who was pastor at Weldon Baptist Church, preached the homecoming sermon on October 23, 1983. During the service Dr. Blackmore introduced his new book, *Sermons at Spring Hope*, which was just off the press. The Children's Moments for the very young people were started during the same service. Mrs. Peggy Creech told them stories with Bible story applications. This practice continues today on a weekly basis.

The use of Advent candles at Sunday morning worship services was initiated on November 27, 1983. One candle would be lighted each Sunday leading up to Christmas until all candles were lighted. The candles represented prophecy, light, love, hope and fulfillment. They have been used each year since. Rev. Creech suggested the use of poinsettias to be placed in the sanctuary for the pre-Christmas season. Anyone who wished to give a plant in memory or in honor of a loved one could give the cost of the plant and the name of the person so remembered to the church secretary, Gwen Walker, by a given date. She would place the order with the florist. The church approved the suggestion and the Flower Committee, Gwen Walker, Delma Geddie, Jo Toney, and Rose Edwards arranged the poinsettias in the sanctuary. The church was lovely. An anonymous gift of brass candlesticks with hurricane globes had been received. They were placed in the stained glass windows and flanked with Christmas greenery. The Christmon tree was decorated as usual with Mrs. John Link and Clyde Best in charge. This treatment of the sanctuary has been repeated each year since 1983.

The preacher taught a Bible Study class in January, 1984. The Books of Corinthians were studied. The W.M.U. was very active under the leadership of President Clarice Link. Twenty-two faithful volunteers were active in the Meals on Wheels ministry. The Baptist women groups were led by Melba Pitts, Kitty McLaughlin, and Sarah Purkerson. The youth organizations were led by: Peggy Earp and Barbara Morgan, Directors for Mission Friends; Peggy Creech and Melanie Brantley for Girls in Action; Donna Best and Peggy Bissette for Senior Acteens; and Ann Harris and Carol Crocker for Junior Acteens. Mission gifts from First Baptist Church for 1983-1984 had increased to the following sums:

Cooperative Program .....	\$4,225.00
Association Missions .....	1,225.00
State Missions .....	465.00
Home Missions .....	669.00
Foreign Missions .....	940.00
Bible Society .....	200.00

Total gifts to missions ..... \$7,524.00

Mrs. Sarah Matthews donated a crib to the nursery in January, 1984. The Elmo Edwards Memorial Camp Fund was diverted by the Edwards family toward installation in the sanctuary of a sound system for the hearing-impaired. Any balance left was directed to be used toward improving the pre-school department of Sunday School. Mrs. John Link with ten adult choir members took part in the Association music workshop in Louisburg in January, 1984. The handbell choir was rehearsing regularly. They performed at the Association Youth Rally at Pilot Baptist Church on March 3, 1984. Rev. Creech was elected Sunday School and Vacation Bible School Director for the Association. He was very interested in getting a Brotherhood organized in the local church. In March Ed Earp began working with a Royal Ambassador group in grades one through three.

It was about this time in 1984 when Rev. Creech was raising the awareness level of members concerning the outside appearance of the church home. He said:

Whether we believe it or not, its outside appearance speaks loudly of our love and care for our church home. It is identified as the house of God and should be characterized by cleanliness, care, and beauty. We thank Rex Stevens, Jake and Arnold Hawks for getting us started in the direction of beautifying our grounds.

Saturday, March 17, was set aside to get the grounds in shape for sowing grass. A Shrubbery and Grounds Fund was started. Memorials were directed toward this project. A committee was named in July to study and make plans for landscaping and planting. J.T. Edwards, Rex Stevens, Lem Laney, Joe Woodard, Lena Morgan, Valerie Bass, and Rotha White served on the committee. Sadie Mae Abernathy gave valuable help. It was decided to remove all the old shrubbery, break up the yard, fertilize, seed with grass so that it would be ready to put out new shrubbery in the fall. All this was accomplished with the help of Warren Boone, agriculture teacher, and his students.

Rev. Al Holley became the Youth Director. He led the young people in many varied activities which stressed Christian ethics and conduct. The Children's Choir was formed with Jean Womble, director. Bonnie Perry Matthews served as their pianist until she and her family moved away. Thereafter her mother, Pauline Perry, served as accompanist. Jean volunteered to provide transportation to and from practice for the small children. The Children's Choir still functions under her direction at this writing.

Four Baptismal robes (one for the Pastor and one for each of three candidates) were given anonymously to the church. Ron Taylor had investigated systems and prices for installing sound amplification in the sanctuary. He recommended a system which the Steve Schmidt Music Center of Rocky Mount sold at a cost of approximately \$1,020 97. The church voted to adopt his recommendation. The final cost after installation was \$1,348.50. The Edwards Memorial Camp Fund helped considerably towards this purchase. The Deacons recommended that all undesignated memorials be put into a Memorial Fund. The needs with the most pressing priority would be met from this fund. The church voted in favor of the recommendation.

In the meantime a relief fund was gathered for the Red Springs' community which had suffered severe tornado damage and \$1,129.76 was collected for the World Hunger relief, the focus being on Togo, West Africa. There the people were suffering the worst famine since 1974.

*The Letter* was expanded by about 25% in May, 1984. It was wider and gave more space for news of the church. Cushions for the pews in the Morgan Chapel were donated by Mrs. B.G. Morgan. They were in keeping with those placed in the sanctuary by Mrs. Ben Wood in 1974. Rev. Holley resigned as Youth Director to accept work in Rocky Mount. Miss Anita Manning became the new director. She worked quite well with the young people.

Homecoming was celebrated on October 7, 1984. Dr. Stephen Edwards, Raleigh, son of Mrs. Elmo Edwards and the late Mr. Edwards of Spring Hope, brought the message "Coming Home" at worship service. As usual a fellowship lunch was served in the Assembly Hall.

Terry Alford, local attorney, spoke to the youth on "Youth and the Law" on December 9, 1984. It was arranged by Anita Manning and was a very informative program. They had arranged a display outside the church for the Pumpkin Festival for which they won \$25.00 for the best church display. The young people were very active and were doing some quality work.

In February, 1985, the church presented the Pastor a book, *The Hebrew — Greek Key to the Bible*, as a token of the love of his members and in celebration of his second anniversary as minister at First Baptist Church. He was a modest, friendly, energetic man, well-liked and willing to work alongside his people. He never failed to visit the sick, bereaved, shut-in, and those in the hospital. He was one of the best pastors in some time. Mrs. Darwin Weaver and sons, Frank and Van, gave a pewter water goblet for the pulpit in loving memory of Darwin and Dale Weaver.

The Southern Baptist Convention was meeting in June, 1985, in Dallas, Texas. There was divisiveness in the convention due to different

interpretations of the Bible. Rev. Creech asked the members to commit fifteen minutes on Tuesday, June 11, to prayer for the Christian resolution of the divisiveness. A prayer schedule was set up with volunteers from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Prayer for healing, renewal, and revival was needed and requested. The schedule was filled. Rev. Creech, Mrs. John Link, Miss Corinne Pridgeon, and Mrs. Virginia Bigelow attended the convention in Dallas.

The Memorial Committee proposed that the church offices be moved downstairs for easier access. The church agreed. These were considering also the improvement of the appearance of the Baptistry which was concealed by draperies. A stained glass window was recommended for that spot and the change was approved by the church.

In October, 1985, Mrs. Mumford, Librarian, and assistant, Mrs. Mary Edwards, resigned. Mrs. Peggy Bissette with Amy Womble, assistant, became the new Librarian. Tommy May retired from the Memorial Committee. Ed Williams was named the new member to serve with Mrs. Roland Geddie and Mrs. McNair Gaskins. Rev. Creech became the Royal Ambassador leader.

Dr. Blackmore delivered the sermon on October 20, 1985, Homecoming Day. His subject was "Homecoming: Ancient, Modern, and Eternal." Rev. Allen and family returned to Spring Hope in October to make their home. While here Joshua was baptized and joined the local church soon after their return. Hand rails were installed at the rear steps of the breezeway and a sidewalk paved from those steps to the rear driveway. In November, Anita Manning resigned as Youth Director. Her work was taking her elsewhere. She agreed to meet with the young people until a new director was hired. Karen Metcalf, student at Southeastern Seminary, was hired in January, 1986. Church membership at the end of the church year, 1984-1985, was reported. There were 285 resident members and eighty-eight non-residents, making a total of 333.

The first "Hanging of the Greens" was held on December 1, 1985. This was a service where the congregation participated in enhancing the beauty of Christmas in the sanctuary. Poinsettias, greenery, and hanging swags were placed effectively. The church was beautiful. The progressive lighting of a candle held by each individual member while singing "Silent Night" was very touching. It signified sharing the light of the gospel with one's neighbors. It was a beautiful, spiritual and successful service. The practice has been maintained through 1988.

The removal of the church offices to downstairs quarters was completed in January, 1986. Two classes had been moved upstairs to the former office quarters in order to give space for the secretary's office as well as the pastor. It was a much better arrangement.



The North Carolina Woman's Missionary Union would celebrate its 100th anniversary all year long. The local Centennial Chairman, Mrs. B.G. Morgan, followed suggestions recommended by the North Carolina W.M.U. for observing a year long observance of the birthday. The program was begun with a gala birthday party in January in which every member of the local society participated. The First Baptist Woman's Day was observed in February with the women staging and executing a Sunday morning worship service. A Prayer Retreat was held in May and an appropriate observance held each month during the year. This included a 100 day prayer schedule.

The church participated in simultaneous revivals across America. Dr. John C. Carlton, Professor of Preaching at Southeastern Seminary, led the Spring Hope revival March 9-12. Rev. Creech stated that he felt that there was spiritual growth among the church members, that much had been accomplished both spiritually and physically, and that there had been an increase in new members by baptism and by letter. Giving to missions had increased. Greater participation in local missions was evident and the church buildings were more beautiful. He encouraged the Deacons to spend more time on the spiritual needs of families.

Fluorescent lights were placed in all the classrooms in 1986. Plexiglass had been installed over the stained glass windows. A \$1,000.00 surplus from that fund had been transferred to the General Fund. A new pictorial directory of church members was published. The Budget and Finance Committee urged more generous contributions. A Mumford Reading Shelf was established in the Library to honor Mrs. Mumford, retired Librarian, who had served for sixteen years.

A Centennial Committee was named in July, 1986, as a steering committee to formulate some plans to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the church in 1989. Mrs. Dorothy Inscoe, Delma Geddie, Lena Morgan, Terri Allen, Dan McLaughlin, and Johnny Edwards were selected for that committee. Mrs. Allen moved away in the spring of 1987 and Mrs. Ann Harris was named to replace her.

In the fall of 1986, Dr. W.R. McCollum, Director of Missions for the Tar River Association, retired after eight years of service. Rev. William A. Wallace became the new director in March, 1987. Sue Woodard gave up her post as Church Treasurer and Paula Bass Proctor assumed those duties in October, 1986. Rotha White surrendered her duties as church clerk. She had served the church in that capacity for twenty-two years. Carolyn Cale became the new church clerk.

Betsy Morris Goodrich, a former member, presented the church a gift of furniture, a Hammond organ, and a Baby Grand piano from her mother's estate. The piano was declined because of its size. The organ could be used in



the Assembly Hall. The furniture was presented with the idea that it could be sold with the proceeds going to the music program.

The Deacons held a retreat at Dr. Howard Weeks' cabin in November, 1986. This was a first for the church deacons. The purpose was to raise the awareness of the spiritual needs of First Baptists, to learn how to be good deacons, to serve in a meaningful way. They shared in thanksgiving, prayer, personal testimony and dreams for the church and its ministry. The deacons agreed that the retreat was a peak experience.

The Baptistry stained glass window and the new brass wall sconces were dedicated. The sconces were given in loving memory of M.V. Parrish by Mrs. Parrish and family. The stained glass window was given by many families and friends who had contributed in memory of or in honor of many individuals. The dedication was held on December 7, 1986. The gifts enhanced the beauty of the sanctuary.

The 1987 budget was approved in the amount of \$70,648.00. It was felt that extensive repairs would not be needed for 1987. The church voted in December to place forty-four storm windows in the Education Building when the funds were available. Individual contributions made by January 31, 1987, to that fund reached an amount sufficient to complete that project.

Four beautiful brass chandeliers were given for the sanctuary in February, 1987. These were given to the glory of God and in loving memory of the following: Earl and Alton Cummings by Mrs. Blanche Cummings; McNair and Mrs. Sudie Gaskins by Mrs. Virginia Gaskins; Arthur Morgan and Bruce Sykes by Mrs. Lillian Morgan; and their loved ones by Mrs. Lucille Pace and Mrs. Ellen Williams. The chandeliers and sconces were dedicated on May 17, 1987, at a special service during the morning worship hour. The pastor's sermon was fittingly titled "The Light of the World".

In February of 1987, Chaplain Allen, U.S. Marine Corps, had the opportunity for advancement in his field of endeavor. It would necessitate further training and removal from Spring Hope to relocate in Pittsburgh, PA. Mrs. Allen and the boys waited until the end of the spring school term ended in June to move away. Spring Hope was proud of Rev. Allen's opportunity, but sad to see a valuable family leave.

The church received a legacy from the estate of Mrs. Mattie Mumford. It consisted of an \$1,800.00 gift to the Lottie Moon Christmas offering; and a gift of \$2,400.00 to be used as a scholarship fund for worthy students, the sum used to be repaid at not more than 8% per year. According to the Executor, Leon Smith, the church was not bound by her wishes. The church named a Scholarship Committee as follows: Mrs. Elsie Wilder, Mrs. Drake Smith and James Oliver Brantley.

The Librarian, Mrs. Elsie Wilder, arranged an outstanding display in the Library in observance of Mother's Day, 1987. She had used attractive

pictures of the church mothers both living and deceased against a soft pink background. Mrs. Wilder had prepared timely displays throughout her service as Librarian. Mr. and Mrs. Earl Purkerson, Therman Edwards, and Rev. Creech attended the Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis, MO. in June.

The church decided that gifts given to the church would be gladly received by the church. The Constitution and By-Laws did not include anything regarding gifts to the church. The Deacons recommended the following article governing the handling of gifts:

## ARTICLE VII

### Gifts to the Church

To insure proper consideration and stewardship of gifts, the church will follow these guidelines:

Section I. Gifts given in memory of an individual are received gladly by the church. Recommendations concerning these gifts will be made by the Memorial Committee to the church. When these gifts involve property (land, furniture, instruments, etc.) or structural changes to the sanctuary or other buildings, the Board of Trustees will be consulted before recommendations are made to the church. At all times the Chairman of Deacons and Pastor shall be informed of all proposed recommendations. Final decisions on individual memorial projects are made by the church.

Section II. Other gifts will also be received gladly and channeled through the appropriate Board or Committee. When these gifts are offered with specific stipulations concerning use, these stipulations must be clearly stated and must be understood by the church. The Board or Committee working with the individual or families offering such gifts will keep the Pastor, Chairman of Deacons and Chairman of Trustees (when appropriate) informed of all the proposed recommendations. Final approval of acceptance of such gifts rests with the church.

Upon unanimous approval the foregoing Article VII was made an addition to the Constitution.

A new typewriter was purchased for Secretary Gwen Walker. The old typewriter was put in the pastor's study for his use. Karen Metcalf resigned as Youth Director in August, 1987. Jean White, student at Southeastern, took Karen's place in September, 1987, and is still with the young people's work.

To the sorrow of church members, Ron Taylor resigned as organist on September 29 to become effective on January 10, 1988. The Music

Committee had its work cut out for it. It would not be easy to replace his fine talent and impressive training. The World Hunger drive was held in October, raising \$1,085.40. The Royal Ambassadors held a Beans and Cornbread Supper to raise money for World Hunger. They cleared \$189.00. Dr. John Morgan, vascular surgeon of Tarboro, and a product of Spring Hope and First Baptist, spoke on "Homecoming: Our Ultimate Goal" on October 18, 1987. The traditional mid-day meal was served in the Social Hall following the service in the sanctuary.

Revival was scheduled for October 25-30, 1987. Dr. Terry Thomas, pastor of Blackville Baptist Church, Blackville, S.C. did the preaching. He had been pastor of Rev. Creech's home church for many years. The music was led by Steve Kegley, Minister of Music at Franklinton Baptist Church. A new treatment of music for revival involved having different individuals to bring a fifteen minute recital of special music. It replaced the traditional congregational singing prior to the service. The older people missed this participation and hoped it would be included another year. The third "Hanging of the Greens" was observed on December 6, 1987. The choirs presented the traditional Christmas music service on December 20 and the Creech family held Open House at the parsonage following the music program.

In the fall and winter of 1987-1988 the Memorial Committee was authorized to redecorate the Pastor's Study, keeping in mind a more attractive, relaxed atmosphere. A new desk was given in memory of Robert Norman Williams by the Jerry Richardson family. Mrs. Sadie Mae Abernathy gave a used loveseat. This was re-upholstered and the committee purchased end tables, lamps, two matching chairs, and new draperies. The print, "Christ and the Rich Young Ruler" by artist Heinrich Hofman, hanging over the loveseat is one that Dr. and Mrs. Blackmore gave to the church when they left the Spring Hope pastorate. The furnishings were dedicated on January 31, 1988.

The Pitts Music Scholarship Fund Committee recommended to the church in conference on December 16, 1987, that the scholarship be awarded to Candace Creech to study organ for 1988.

Rev. Creech summarized the work of the church for 1987 in *The Letter* on January 7, 1988. He stated:

In 1987 we met or exceeded every special offering goal and we give God the glory. Our worship through giving has been good; however, 1988 offers a new challenge. Our adopted budget calls for \$1,453.46 each Sunday to meet our projected expenses. That's about \$100.00 more per Sunday than the projected budget needs were in 1987. Our challenge is well

within our reach if each of us will give just a little bit more. Seek the Lord's guidance in your giving and be faithful to him each Sunday.

In 1987 we also completed many improvements in our facilities. Thanks to you, Memorial contributions, the Trustees, and Memorial Committee, for all the fine work that has made our facilities more beautiful places in which to worship our God.

In 1988 let us continue to grow spiritually and build upon all the good blessings that are already ours.

As Ron Taylor had indicated earlier, he gave up his position as organist on January 10, 1988. The church held a covered dish supper in his honor on January 9. He had given his professional talents to the church for fourteen years. The quality of the music program was superior. Pauline Perry agreed to play for services as best she could although she had not been trained in organ. She would play until the Music Committee could find a suitable candidate. It took courage for Pauline to attempt to play. She did a great service to the church.

Paula Proctor resigned the Treasurer's position on January 13, 1988. Former Treasurer Sue Woodard agreed to fill Paula's unexpired term. The W.M.U. was very active under the leadership of Betty Claire May. The youth of the church, led by Jean White, kept busy with various projects. Of note is the evening of February 14 when the entire church joined the youth in staging a Sweetheart (Valentine) Banquet. It was a covered-dish supper. The highlight of the occasion was a "Roast" of Rev. Creech. He had been First Baptist pastor for exactly five years. Dr. Ashby Inscoe took great pleasure in "roasting" the preacher, but it was done in a loving way and Rev. Creech took the "ribbing" good-naturedly. Jake Hawks, Ed Williams and Carl Banks were given watches and certificates of appreciation for their caring attention to the many details of church maintenance. The church presented the pastor a weed-eater. He was noted for keeping a trim yard, but he trimmed the edges the hard way. The tool would make trimming easier. He was pleased. He stated in *The Letter* on February 18:

Thank all of you, our youth, and even Ashby for a good night of fun and fellowship. Our five years together as pastor and church have been very rewarding and fulfilling in our ministry together for the Lord. I thank Him and you, over and over, for patience, understanding, and love extended to me. I've still much room to grow and improve and I am committed to continuing to serve the Lord as He sees fit to use me.

Mrs. John Link, Choir Director, had indicated earlier that she would



resign her duties at First Baptist. At church conference on April 13, 1988, she tendered her resignation effective April 30. She had accepted the directorship of the Sanctuary Choir of Warrenton Baptist Church. Her resignation was accepted with regrets. She had given twenty years of her time, talent and effort to the music program of the church. The choir held a covered-dish supper on April 23 to show their appreciation and that of the church for her constancy.

The church voted to call Mrs. Martha Crowell to serve as organist on a six-weeks trial basis and Mrs. Sylvia Sutter to serve as Choir Director on a six-weeks trial basis upon the recommendation of the Music Committee. Also on April 13, the church voted to buy the one-year old copier on loan from Hudson Business Machines, Inc., Rocky Mount. It was noted that there was a five-year warranty on the machine. An anonymous gift of placing new tiles in the vestibules of the church was accepted gratefully.

The church was called into conference on June 5 and voted to accept Mrs. Sutter and Mrs. Crowell as permanent Choir Director and Organist. The Choir boasted of several new members. The members, after some uncertainty, felt that the music program would maintain a high level of effectiveness. Mrs. Pauline Perry was presented a certificate of appreciation for her services as interim organist.

During 1988 a book in which to record designated memorial gifts was given anonymously. A beautiful walnut cabinet with a display case in which to keep the book was also given anonymously. The church gratefully accepted these gifts. The cabinet was placed in the north vestibule of the sanctuary. The Memorial Committee was charged with the duty of recording specific memorial gifts.

The Centennial Committee Chairman, Dorothy Inscoe, announced the sale of note cards with a pen and ink sketch of the church and its centennial dates. These could be bought in the office of the Secretary. Sweat shirts with the Centennial logo were available from Centennial Committee members. Proceeds from these sales were directed toward the expense of the planned Centennial celebration.

At a regular business conference on July 13, 1988, the church voted to have an A-type roof built over the door on Bridgers Alley in order to offer protection in foul weather. Carl Banks and Ed Williams built the roof. In July three Royal Ambassadors attended R.A. Camp at Asheboro for a week. The R.A. Director, Edward Earp, accompanied Dustin Creech, Eddie Earp and Michael Morgan for the week of July 18.

Jean White, Youth Director, advised that the church would best be served by using youth allocated funds in other areas during the summer since the group was so small. She asked to be put on inactive status without pay until the number of participating young people increased sufficiently. Then



an active program could be resumed. Her recommendation was accepted.

Memorial funds were available for the purchase of a new piano for the sanctuary. The one in use was old and needed replacing. Valerie Bass, Chairman of the Music Committee, announced on July 13, 1988, that a 48-Yamaha piano priced at \$6,295.00 could be purchased for \$3,700.00 plus sales tax and trade-in of the old piano. The price would include delivery, tuning, and a ten-year warranty. The Memorial Committee stated that the fund lacked \$252.00 of the \$3,700.00. An anonymous donor volunteered to pay the balance. The church voted to buy the piano and authorized the Music Committee to purchase and position the piano in the sanctuary.

Homecoming was observed on October 16, 1988, with Rev. Allen Allen, former pastor, preaching at the morning service. Dinner was served following that in the Fellowship Hall. After the meal, Mrs. B.G. Morgan, Historian, presented a personal gift of framed pictures of former pastors and Rev. Creech, the Church Education Building, Parsonage and the original deed, dated December 31, 1894. This property is that on Walnut Street on which the church and Education Building now stand. The gift was an outgrowth of the research Mrs. Morgan had done in compiling the church history. Rev. Creech accepted the gift for the church.

A called meeting of the membership on September 28, 1988, was held for the purpose of accepting the resignation of Ted Bissett and Merle Cale from the Finance Board and Mrs. Ashby Incoe from the Board of Trustees. They felt that since they would be Deacons, it was not fitting that they should serve on two of the main governing bodies of the Church. At the regular business conference in October, Dan McLaughlin and Joe Woodard were elected to fill the vacancies on the Finance Board. Mrs. Carl Strickland was elected to fill the vacancy on the Board of Trustees. Earl Purkerson replaced Ed Williams whose term on the Memorial Committee had expired.

November was designated World Hunger Month. \$1,228.95 was raised for that cause. Scott Auer, member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and defensive captain of the N.C. State football team, spoke at the morning service on November 1. This was sponsored by the Royal Ambassadors. The R.A.'s also held a bean and cornbread supper on November 27 in the Assembly Hall to raise money for the World Hunger program. They raised over \$200.00.

The Foreign Mission Study Course for Baptist Women was held at Ephesus Baptist Church on Sunday evening, November 20. Mrs. JoAnn Wallace, wife of the Director of Missions in the Tar River Association, taught the study. Many of First Baptist women attended.

The community Thanksgiving service was held in the Baptist Church on Wednesday, November 23, 1988. The Rev. Dennis Goodwin, pastor of Gibson Memorial Methodist Church, was the speaker. Choirs from the

Methodist and Baptist Churches provided the music. Ephesus, Holly Grove, and Peachtree churches participated.

A severe tornado struck in the area in November. The Baptists took a collection for tornado relief. The offering reached \$522.00.

The traditional "Hanging of the Greens" was observed on December 4, 1988, at five o'clock. It was at this time that the church decorated for Christmas. Each part of the decorating was accompanied by the reading of relevant scripture and appropriate music rendered by the choir. The congregation joined the choir in singing traditional carols. The children's choir participated also. Poetry and a littyany of praise were used. The lighting of individual candles by each one present represented the light of the world, Jesus, and the responsibility of each individual to share that light with his neighbor. It was a joyous occasion filled with praise and thanksgiving. The congregation was invited to a reception in the Fellowship Hall immediately following the service. The Lottie Moon Christmas offering was \$1,165.00.

The budget for 1989 was presented for discussion and approval at the regular business conference on January 11, 1989. Due to the economic pressures the budget was reduced from \$75,580.00 to \$68,630.00 for the fiscal year 1989. It was reduced by cutting the newsletter from a weekly issue to a monthly issue and by eliminating the pastor's birthday cards to members, by leaving off teachers' books for assistant teachers, cutting gifts to the Cooperative Program and eliminating Christmas bonuses. The Spring Revival was announced for April 30 - May 3, 1989, with O.B. Martin of the North Carolina Baptist Convention preaching.

The church was into its one hundredth year and plans were continuing for the Centennial Celebration in 1989. The members were to celebrate throughout 1989. They felt great comfort in the accomplishments of the past, for growth in spirit, in service, in Christian love, in witnessing and in physical development. On the other hand they realized that the Lord's work is never done and that they must continue to perservere. They also felt fortunate to have had caring pastors through the years to guide them in their work for the Lord. How blessed First Baptist Church is to have had such a noble lot to lead it successfully in shaping a good history that shows honor and reverence for God and the individual!



## CHAPTER SEVEN

# The Pastors, 1889-1989

First Baptist Church, Spring Hope, has been blessed with pastors of excellent quality with most of them having college training in ministerial work. Even the interim pastors, except one, were ministerial students or graduates of a school of religion. Eighteen of the twenty-one pastors have attended Wake Forest College at some point in their pastoral career. The local church has always had quality pastors.

The work of the church grew slowly in the first quarter of its hundred year history. This was probably due to the fact that services were held only once and twice during the month. The pastors were not residents of Spring Hope, but their pastoral work and effective preaching held the church together. At one point for over a year in the early twenties there was no regular pastor after Rev. Hines resigned on November 19, 1919. Three interim pastors served but were able to keep the doors open for Sunday worship services and Sunday School. These were well attended. Rev. B.O. Myers assumed the pastorate at some time in 1921. He gave up his duties in Spring Hope, effective January 1, 1924.

Up until the time that Reverend James Ambrose Ward came to be the regular pastor in 1924, the pastor's salary was not budgeted, but canvassed, making it necessary for him to seek supplementary means of income. Rev. Ward started having services every Sunday and initiated in the local church the envelope system of contributing. The pastor's salary was no longer in doubt. During the Cullom years, 1929-1941, the congregation was without a resident pastor, but much spiritual growth was realized. The membership grew and the seeds for material growth and quality growth were planted in those years. First Baptist was fifty years old during Dr. Cullom's pastorate.

No church history is complete if it does not include those who provided leadership during that period of time. Pastors are the leaders who channel the direction which their individual church will take. They are not able to lead members where they are not willing to be directed, but they can and usually

do influence for good the path which the church takes.

Some pastors have been primarily spiritual leaders, teachers, and preachers. Others have been strong influences for development of facilities. A few have been forceful in both areas, physical and spiritual. Both facets are necessary and the variety of personalities who have served the Spring Hope Church has brought leaders of both. Therefore, it is suitable that the pastors should be recognized as part of the history of First Baptist. They have been channels of blessings that have crowned its spiritual and physical growth and development over its one hundred year history. Praise God for affording such wonderful leaders!

### **John A. Bridges, 1889-1892**

Little information about Rev. John A. Bridges, the first pastor of Missionary Baptist Church at Spring Hope, N.C., was located. *The Wake Forest Alumni Directory*, Wake Forest College, 1961, alphabetically arranged, states that he was a graduate of that college in 1889 with an LLB Degree, having attended Wake Forest Law School. His address was given as Wilson, North Carolina. He is credited locally with being the principal of the Spring Hope Academy located on South Pine Street in 1889. Preaching was held only one Sunday a month. That made it necessary for pastors to have other means of livelihood. Many of them during that period of history did teach. He was pastor at Red Bud Church in the Tar River Association at the same time during 1890 and 1891. Bridges was pastor at Spring Hope until spring of 1892. One E.A. Bridges is listed among the early members of the church. It is purely speculative that this was Rev. Bridges' wife. Many female names were entered with initials rather than with spelling out the given name. By 1900 Bridges was pastor at Forest City, N.C. No further data was located.

### **William Cullen Nowell 1892-1896; 1907-1908**

William Cullen Nowell was born at Wendell in Wake County, N.C. At an early age he manifested great interest in the Christian religion and was licensed to preach in 1858. That fall he entered Wake Forest College where he studied 1858-1861. Nowell was ordained in 1863 at Hephzibah Baptist Church in Wake County. Among the many churches he served as pastor were Eagle Rock, Nashville, New Hope, Clayton, Samaria, Smithfield, Elm City, Poplar Springs, and Archer Lodge. Just prior to filling the Spring Hope pulpit once a month, he served at Cedar Rock. In the Tar River Association he was pastor at Rock Springs, Castalia, Stony Creek, Oak Level, Hickory,



Nashville, and other churches.

Rev. Nowell was a preacher of decided ability. In his pastoral work he was distinguished in two respects, first as a winner of souls, and second for his success in training and developing the members of his congregation. He was the author of a book, *Lectures on the Book of Revelations*.

*The Baptist Ministerial Directory* - George W. Lasher, Ed., page 537. *A History of the Tar River Baptist Association 1830-1921* - Taylor, p.296.

### **John William Powell, 1897-1898**

John William Powell was born in Sampson County, N.C. on September 25, 1854. He attended Clinton Academy and Trinity College, N.C. Seminary 1887-1888 and was ordained at Mount Gilead Baptist Church in Sampson County on May 30, 1887. He was pastor in Rocky Mount beginning in January, 1889.

Romance entered his life. Miss Lillie F. Arrington, a Methodist young lady, went to Rocky Mount Baptist to play the pump organ. She won the pastor's heart. She joined the Baptist Church in July, 1889, and later became Mrs. Powell. Rev. Powell remained in Rocky Mount until 1890 when he became pastor of the Enfield Baptist Church. He came to the Spring Hope Church in 1897.

Later in 1901 and 1902 he was listed in the Southern Baptist Convention annual as being in Rochelle, Georgia. The Southern Baptist Convention annuals of 1903 and 1904 list J.W. Powell as being in Kentwood, Louisiana and by 1905 the annual listed J.W. Powell as having died in Georgetown, S.C., on July 27, 1904. He was noted for being a good preacher.

*Southern Baptist Seminary, 1859-89, page 163, John R. Sampey*

*Biblical Recorder, September 25, 1901*

*History of the Tar River Baptist Association, 1830-1921, Taylor, page 296*

*We Remember Our Heritage - a History of Rocky Mount Baptist Church, pp.21 and 22.*

### **Joseph E. Hocutt, 1898-1902**

Joseph E. Hocutt was born in Wake County, N.C., on July 7, 1864. In infancy he was removed with his parents to Johnston County where they reared nine children. He had little early education due to the annual school term lasting only four to six weeks. In early life he was impressed that it was

his duty to preach the gospel. Realizing the need for preparation he entered Wakefield School at the age of twenty-one. Later he continued his studies at Stanhope Academy in Nash County where Rev. A.A. Pippen was principal. In 1892 at the age of 28 Hocutt entered Wake Forest College where he remained for two years. He intended to complete the course but his health failed and he was compelled to leave college.

He settled in Nash County in 1894 and began teaching. In a very short time a group of churches called him to the pastorate and he was ordained at the Stanhope Baptist Church in Nash County. The Presbytery that examined him was composed of Rev. W.C. Nowell, Rev. A.A. Pippen and the Deacons of the Stanhope Church. The year following he was fully occupied in preaching the gospel. At one time or another he was pastor of every Baptist Church in Nash County except four. He was pastor at Samaria for eleven years, Ephesus for fifteen, Elm Grove for eighteen and Spring Hope for four. While in Spring Hope the membership and contributions of the local church more than doubled.

Rev. Hocutt married twice. First, he married Miss Ida Harper of Stanhope. They had seven children. After Mrs. Ida's death he married Miss Ida Hilliard of Middlesex. Rev. Hocutt was an ardent advocate of missions and of education.

*A History of the Tar River Association, 1820-1921* -Taylor, pages 254, 255.

### **Albert G. Willcox, 1902-1905**

Albert G. Willcox was a native of Halifax County, N.C., the son of Elder Thomas Willcox and Martha T. Alston Willcox. He was born near Brinkleyville on April 19, 1945. At the age of nineteen, Albert Willcox was converted and ordained in 1879. Rev. Willcox served as clerk of the Tar River Association for forty-one years. He had a heated passion for souls. His energy was untiring, his humility profound, and his faith in God unfaltering. He preached plain, logical, gospel truths. He was a small man, being a little over five feet tall, weighed 125 pounds, had a thin voice, but a radiant personality. He was very well liked in the Spring Hope community. At what point he married Miss Josephine Mason of Northampton County is not known. They had three daughters, one of whom married a Spring Hope young man. Mary Willcox and Clement Richardson were married and lived in Spring Hope on Bunn Lane. Mary and Clement had no children.

Rev. Willcox died on April 16, 1921.

*Taylor's History of the Tar River Association, 1830-1921*, page 185.

## **D.F. Putnam, 1909-1911**

D. F. Putnam was born in 1870 near Shelby, N.C., where he attended grade school. He attended Wake Forest College and the Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. In 1896 he married Miss Elizabeth Spangler. They had three daughters, Vivian, Pearl, and Lois. Mr. Putnam was ordained to the gospel ministry in his home church, Zion.

He is remembered in Spring Hope as a tall, handsome man and a good preacher. He was friendly to all and knew how to inspire others to work at the Lord's business. He served the Nashville and Cypress Chapel churches while in Spring Hope.

It was during his pastorate that the brick church was constructed. He carried bricks up the ladder and helped wherever he could. When the stained glass windows and the pews failed to arrive in time for the Roanoke Association meeting in Spring Hope in 1910, Putnam ingeniously covered the windows with burlap to keep out the glare and the sun. He is said to have put boards across saw horses for seats. One room of the new building was named the Putnam Room in his honor. That room was located where the Morgan Chapel is today. It was only half as large as the Morgan Chapel.

In his fifty years of active ministry, he had a part in the organization and building or remodeling of forty-three Baptist Churches. In 1947 while overseeing the construction of Temple Baptist Church Auditorium, Rev. Putnam was stricken and died five days later on September 4.

## **William Octavius Rosser, 1912-1914**

William Octavius Rosser, the oldest son of W.W. Rosser and his wife, Jennie O. Rosser, was born on July 9, 1874, near Essex in Halifax County, N.C. His early education was meager since few schools or academies operated for many months of the year. In the winter the roads were often impossible or the school buildings poorly heated. During the warm months the young people were needed to help with farm work. The opportunity for school was limited to three or four months total out of a calendar year. The teachers of the early schools boarded or lived in the home of a prominent family in the community and often married someone in that area. He attended Gold Mine Academy in 1894-1895.

For some time Rosser lived in the country home of relatives near Whitakers and walked a considerable distance daily to attend classes at Moore's Academy in Whitakers. He was licensed to preach in July, 1897, and ordained at Fishing Creek Baptist Church in the Tar River Association in August, 1898. At the time he was a student at Wake Forest College where he graduated in 1900 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree. Upon graduating from

Wake Forest he taught for two years, 1900-1902, at Philadelphia Academy in Nash County and preached as the opportunity allowed. He pursued theological studies at Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania, and completed that course in 1905. Following graduation from Crozer he was pastor for four and a half years at East Radford, Virginia. From East Radford he answered the call to Crewe Baptist Church, Crewe, Virginia. While at Crewe, he met Miss Nancy Baldwin Verser, a school teacher, who soon became his bride on June 22, 1910. She had graduated from college with a Music Major. Her musical training was a big asset to Rev. Rosser throughout his ministry among all the churches he pastored. She played whatever instrument was available, whether pump organ or piano.

Rev. and Mrs. Rosser moved to North Carolina where he had accepted the pastorate at First Baptist Church in Spring Hope. His work began in January, 1912. He brought the messages of God and she led the choir and the Ladies' Aid. They were always reaching out to bring others to Christ. They made their home on Bunn Alley, the last house on the left at the East end of the street. There their first child, William Octavius Rosser, Junior, was born. The Rossers led the church well until October 7, 1914, when the First World War was looming large on the horizon. The North Carolina Baptist Convention asked him to go to Whitakers to conduct prayer meetings since the Primitive Baptist Faith was so strong there. He left the Spring Hope pastorate and began the work at Whitakers in January, 1915. He served a field of churches there, including Dortches, Battleboro, Gethsemane, Ebenezer, Hickory, and Whitakers. On fifth Sundays he preached at Salem School House later to become Salem Baptist Church. His mode of travel during this period was a horse and buggy. Sometime later he bought a Model-T Ford. Rosser was active in the Whitakers area from 1915 to 1929. He again attended Wake Forest College in 1926-1928. In 1931-1932 he was called to Johnston County Baptist Association at Smithfield to pastor Pisgah, Pleasant Grove, Pauline and Shiloh Baptist Churches. This was during the depression when people had little money. Rev. Rosser established a plan called "The Lord's Acre". This gave the members an opportunity to give their farm produce to the sale and auction it as a "Harvest Day Sale". The money derived therefrom helped to provide funds for operating the churches. Later the churches became strong enough to have regular budgets.

Rev. Rosser and his family left the Smithfield charge to retire in Whitakers. Even though he had retired from active ministry, he was always ready to serve wherever he saw a need. He preached for 45 years. In 1941 he died at the age of 67 and is buried at the Rosser Cemetery at the homeplace in Halifax County near Aventon.

There were four children by this union of Nancy Verser and W.O.



Rosser as follows: William Octavius, Jr., Nancy Verser Rosser, Mary Elizabeth Rosser and Henry Judson Rosser.

Information courtesy of daughter, Nancy Rosser Kutulas, Whitakers, N.C.

*A History of the Tar River Baptist Association, 1830-1921* - Thomas J. Taylor, page 305

### **Oscar Whaley Sawyer, 1914-1917**

Oscar Whaley Sawyer was born June 19, 1890, in Camden, North Carolina. He was the son of Costen S. Sawyer and Mary Elizabeth Sawyer and was baptized at Sawyer's Creek Church in Camden County. His early education was in the small schools of Camden County, Whitsett Institute at Whitsett, N.C., Wake Forest College, and Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

Sawyer was licensed to preach by his home church on January 2, 1909. His ordination took place on February 27, 1910, at Glenn Royal Baptist Church, Wake Forest, N.C. His first pastorate was at First Baptist Church in Spring Hope beginning in January, 1915. While in Spring Hope he lived at Mrs. Octavia Cone's Boarding House across the railroad street from Mr. and Mrs. Will Taylor. After his pastorate in Spring Hope he returned to marry Miss Addie Mae Taylor, their daughter, on May 22, 1917. Addie Mae was a Methodist. They were married by the Methodist minister, W.T. Phipps. Sawyer baptized his wife when they went to Chincoteague to live in 1917. At the end of 1916, Rev. Sawyer agreed to become pastor at Chincoteague, Virginia. He was subsequently pastor at Plymouth, N.C., Jamestown, N.C. and again at Chincoteague from 1925-1957.

Sawyer was honored with a Doctor of Divinity degree from the University of Richmond in 1951, the Citizenship Award from V.F.W. post 8629 in 1943, was Moderator for the Accomac Baptist Association for two terms, and served on the Board of Trustees and was an Emeritus Trustee for the Naval Air Military Hospital where he served for eighteen years.

The Sawyers were the parents of one child, Elizabeth Sawyer, who now lives in Chincoteague, Virginia, and who supplied much of this information about Dr. Sawyer. He died February 28, 1976, at the Peninsula General Hospital in Salisbury, Maryland. He was eighty-five years old. He had retired in Chincoteague where he was pastor of Union Baptist Church where he had been pastor for thirty-six years.

At this writing, Mrs. Addie May Taylor Sawyer is living in a nursing home in Chincoteague. Their daughter, Elizabeth Sawyer Brasure, lives near by. Mrs. Brasure has one son and one grandson.



The President of the University of Richmond, Dr. G.M. Modlin, said of him, "He was a persuasive preacher of the Christian message, a builder and pastor of one church for more than a quarter of a century, a militant leader of the forces of righteousness, and an honored citizen of his community."

Information courtesy of daughter, Elizabeth Sawyer Brasure, Chincoteague, Virginia.

### **Hugh Benjamin Hines, 1917-1919**

Hugh Benjamin Hines was born on April 10, 1879, at Murfreesboro, Hertford County, N.C., the son of G.W. Hines and Roxana Elizabeth Dukes Hines. Young Hines received his Bachelor of Arts Degree at Wake Forest College in 1909 and attended Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, for one year. He was ordained at Meherrin Baptist Church on March 11, 1911. He had married Miss Dixie Cornelia Hollowell on November 23, 1910, at Edenton Baptist Church, Edenton, N.C. After his year at the Seminary, Rev. Hines began his first pastoral service in a mission field located in Craven County, N.C. He served in this mission field from March, 1911, until April, 1914, when he began working in a mission field in Hyde County, N.C. From Hyde County mission field he answered the call of Spring Hope Baptist Church in April of 1917. Hines gave full time to the Spring Hope Church, trying services every Sunday, but remuneration was not enough and after the first year he reduced the services to twice a month. He also served Peachtree and Macedonia Churches on Sunday afternoons for a part of the Spring Hope pastorate. By November, 1919, he was ready to go back to mission work and at that time accepted the Roanoke Island Mission Field which was partially supported by the Home Mission Board. He returned to mission work in 1920.

Rev. and Mrs. Hines had one son, Hugh Benjamin Hines, Junior, when they moved to Spring Hope. He was about four years old. A younger son, George Wendell Hines, age 2, had died the month before the family came to Spring Hope to live. Margaret Hines was born June, 1917, after they had moved to Spring Hope. Elizabeth Hines was born two years after they went to Roanoke Island. Rev. Hines retired in Sanford, North Carolina, in 1961.

Data from files of Historical Commission, Baptist State Convention, N.C.

### **John R. Carroll, 1920**

For part of one year John R. Carroll was pastor at First Baptist Church, Spring Hope. J. Carlton McGregor, a Wake Forest College student, came

two Sundays a month beginning in November, 1919, when Rev. Hugh Hines returned to mission work. McGregor served until early 1920 when John R. Carroll and his wife came to minister to the Spring Hope Church. They stayed for the most part of 1920. Mrs. Carroll was active in W.M.U. She helped to lead the Sunbeams while she was here. At the end of 1920 Rev. Carroll resigned and another Wake Forest College student, E.G. Stevens, became interim pastor for some months until Rev. B.O. Myers accepted the pastorate in July, 1921.

Wake Forest Alumni Directory.

### **Benjamin Oliver Myers, 1921-1923**

Benjamin Oliver Myers was born September 23, 1887. He received the Bachelor of Arts Degree from Wake Forest College in 1915 and in 1921 the Masters of Theology Degree. He attended Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for an undetermined period of time. Myers accepted the pastorate at Spring Hope in July, 1921.

Myers had been a convincing preacher. In one year alone, twenty-five people were baptized into the church. Preaching was held every Sunday. Mrs. Myers led the Young Women's Auxiliary of the W.M.U. Mrs. Gertie May was President. The Young People's Union was reported for the first time in 1922. The work of the church was vigorous under Rev. Myers' leadership. Rev. Myers tendered his resignation on October 24, 1923, to be effective December 30, 1923.

*The Wake Forest Alumni Directory, 1961* gave his address as 215 West Ocean View Avenue, Norfolk, Virginia. Further search was fruitless.

### **James Ambrose Ward, 1924-1929**

James Ambrose Ward, one of the nine children of Charlie Judson Ward and his wife, Lutie Munden Ward, who lived in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, was born August 17, 1895. Ambrose grew up there, working during his high school years in his father's brick yard. He was ordained a Baptist minister at Blackwell Baptist Church in Elizabeth City.

Rev. Ward graduated from Wake Forest College in 1917 with the Bachelor of Arts Degree. The year following, 1917-1918, he served as principal of Whiteville High School, Whiteville, N.C. During World War I he served sixteen months as Y.M.C.A. Secretary in Army Camps. Following this he attended Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville for a year and transferred his credits to Crozer Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania. There he received the Bachelor of Divinity Degree in 1922.

That year he accepted a two-year pastorate at Stantonsburg, North

Carolina. From Stantonsburg, Rev. Ward accepted the ministry at First Baptist Church, Spring Hope, for a period of five years, 1924-1929. Ward's call came upon the recommendation of the Public School Superintendent J.E. McLean. Rev. Ward's annual salary was set at \$1,800.00 per year. He was the first full time pastor the Spring Hope Church had had in its thirty-five years of existence. The new pastor was unmarried when he began his work in Spring Hope. He roomed with Dr. and Mrs. John R. Wheless on Nash Street, was young, attractive, and apparently available. It is said that the young girls were all excited over having him in Spring Hope. Mrs. Wheless had a niece, Miss Daisy Elma Whitley, of Speed, N.C., who visited with her Aunt Lillian from time to time. It was at the Wheless home that Rev. Ward met Miss Whitley, a romance developed and they were married in Speed on November 8, 1927.

Much was accomplished during Rev. Ward's pastorate in Spring Hope. Economic hard times were beginning to be felt, but Ward's fervor for the Lord's work did not falter. He served as pastor until February, 1929, when he resigned to accept a call to Dillon First Baptist in South Carolina. The following year he was granted a leave of absence for study during the school year 1931-1932. The first semester he studied at Duke University in Durham, N.C. and the second at Crozer Seminary in Pennsylvania where he received the degree of Master of Theology. In 1934 he received the Doctor of Sacred Theology Degree from Temple University in Philadelphia.

Dr. Ward remained with the Dillon Church until February, 1940, when he resigned to continue the Lord's work in First Baptist Church, Walterboro, South Carolina, where he served until the spring of 1950. He began his work at Norway, South Carolina, in April of 1950 and continued working with that Baptist Church until he resigned in February, 1959, and moved with his family to Orangeburg, South Carolina, where he retired. He continued to be active in all denominational work but is remembered in Spring Hope for his good work with the young people in the Sunday School and Training Union Departments. In 1971 Dr. and Mrs. Ward went to live at the Bethea Baptist Retirement Home in Darlington, S. C. He died on May 29, 1975.

This information was furnished by Mrs. J.P. Hastings, 85 year old sister of J.A. Ward, who lives in Elizabeth City, and Dr. Ward's daughter, Mildred Elizabeth Ward Lunney, called "Betsy". Mrs. Lunney lives in Charleston, South Carolina. She and her husband, Sam, have three teenagers.

Information courtesy of daughter, Betsy Ward Lunney, Charleston, S.C.

## **Dr. Willis Richard Cullom, 1929-1941**

Willis Richard Cullom, son of Joseph Joel and Mary Eliza Johnston Cullom, was born on a farm in Halifax County, N.C. on January 15, 1867. In the community where he was reared, church and educational facilities were poor, but his parents were devout Christians. His father had been a school teacher so that Willis had advantage denied most of his associates.

He clerked in a Warren County store 1882-1885, age 15 to 18 years. He then studied and taught with Rev. G.L. Finch in 1885-1886. Impressed that he was called of God to preach the gospel, he entered Wake Forest College September 1, 1886, and graduated with an A.M. Degree in 1892. During his college course he was pastor at Warren Plains for four years. He entered Southern Baptist Seminary on October 1, 1892 where he received the Theology Degree in 1895. He spent 1895-1896 working toward the Doctor of Theology but a spell of typhoid fever interrupted the work.

Cullom began teaching at Wake Forest College in 1896 as a professor of the Bible. He received his Th.D. in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1903, and in 1915 he received the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Divinity. In June, 1918, he was granted a furlough from the college to become General Manager in North Carolina of the Million Dollar Educational Campaign. The next year the \$75,000,000.00 campaign was begun. He was made organizer of that great fund which he carried to a glorious success. In September, 1920, he returned to the School of Religion at Wake Forest.

Rev. Cullom married Miss Fannie Farmer of Louisville, Kentucky on June 2, 1893. They had two sons and three daughters.

Dr. Cullom was Dean of the School of Religion at Wake Forest College when he was contacted in May of 1929 for help in securing a pastor for the First Baptist Church at Spring Hope. He advised that one of his former students, Rev. Olin T. Binkley, who was at the time a student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, be contacted to serve for the summer months. It was hoped at the end of the summer a pastor would be secured. Rev. Binkley had just been ordained in May and would be free for the summer months before returning to the Seminary in the fall. When he returned to Louisville; there was no pastor for Spring Hope. Dr. Cullom decided himself to fill the vacancy for a while still attempting to locate a suitable pastor.

The church appreciated Dr. Cullom's work so much that he was asked to be the commuter pastor. He served the Spring Hope congregation from 1929-1941. He was retired from his position as Dean of the Wake Forest School of Religion in 1938. Nevertheless he did not retire from Christian Ministry and Missions. He continued to preach, teach, and write until early 1963, age 96. He came to Spring Hope every January to celebrate his



birthday with the church he loved so well. January, 1963, was his last. He was becoming weak, confused, and partially blind. His health declined steadily until his death on Sunday, October 20, 1963. He was a humble, gently persuasive man of depth with intense love for people and sincere devotion to God. He lived his religion.

Source: *History of the Tar River Association, 1830-1921* Taylor  
*The Cullom Lantern*, J.H. Blackmore  
First Hand Knowledge.

### A. Lincoln Faulk, 1942-1943

A Lincoln Faulk was born August 11, 1908, in Surry County, the sixth child of Oliver and Lucy Faulk. When he was a small child the family moved to Guilford County, N.C., where Lincoln received his early education in schools of the area. Because of poor health, he went to California at age 16 to stay with a friend and remained there until 1931 when he returned to North Carolina. He resumed his interrupted education to prepare for the ministry at age 23. In the fall of 1931, he enrolled in the High School Department of Buies Creek Academy to complete his high school education. At the same time he carried some courses at Campbell Junior College. He graduated from High School in 1933 with a year's credit toward his college degree. 1933 also marked the beginning of Mr. Faulk's pastorate at North Main Baptist Church in High Point, N.C. He was ordained in that church in September, 1933, and served there 9½ years. During that pastorate, Rev. Faulk completed his college education at High Point College; graduating magna cum laude, in 1946. His college career included debating for which he won state honors. He won district honors for extempore speaking; was a member of the college honor society for scholastic achievement, president of the student body for the senior year and valedictorian of his graduating class. Since then, Faulk has had a summer session with Union Seminary of New York and has taken part in numerous state-wide religious seminars. He is an avid reader and has done some religious writing for publication in the Biblical Recorder. Rev. Faulk was called to the pastorate of Spring Hope Church in the spring of 1942. This was during the war and growth was limited at that time. There was no parsonage so while here Rev. Faulk instituted the move to acquire a home for the minister and led the church to acquire the lot where the parsonage now stands.

In 1943, Rev. Faulk accepted the pastorate in Washington, N.C. He left that church in 1946 to assist in the opening of a radio station at Dunn, N.C. There he invested some of his life savings to assure some sort of income for a growing family and some security for retirement. He remained there for 25



years serving as Commercial Manager, then Manager, and finally as President. They were profitable years by which he was enabled to educate the children. In the meantime he never quit preaching. He served as supply and interim preacher for area churches until the 1980's.

When he retired from radio at the end of 1971, he moved with his family to the mountains. There Faulk served as full-time pastor at Antioch Baptist Church at Mt. Airy, N.C. Rev. and Mrs. Faulk decided to return to Harnett County in 1978. This was where he and Polly had their roots, relatives and old friends. Here they retired.

By his first marriage to Buna Baldwin of California, there were three children, Mamie Lou, Evelyn, and Harlan. By the second marriage to Pauline Eason of Harnett County there were two children, Paul and Susan. All the children are living and married.

Information secured from Rev. Faulk.

### **Millard M. Johnson, 1943-1947**

Millard M. Johnson was born on November 13, 1908, in Johnston County, N.C. He graduated from Micro High School in 1929 and from Wake Forest College in 1942. He served his home church, Carter's Chapel, during his student days at Wake Forest. At the same time he served the community churches of Live Oak, Antioch, Emmaus, and Falling Creek, preaching as many as three sermons per week regularly, and often even more.

After graduating from Wake Forest, Johnson continued his training at Southeastern Seminary. He married Miss Katie Elizabeth Corbett in 1935. Together they have led active lives in the work of the church.

Rev. Johnson served as pastor of the following churches: Bethel Baptist, 1936-1943; Spring Hope Baptist, 1943-1947; Mt. Moriah Baptist near Raleigh, N.C., 1947-1952; Rowan Baptist, Clinton, 1952-1975. He retired in Clinton in 1975, but has held many interim pastorates and continues to do so. Mrs. Johnson retired as a teacher in the North Carolina Public School System in 1977. She still serves as a substitute teacher and often works as many days as full-time teachers.

Rev. Johnson has been active in the Southern Baptist Convention from the very beginning of his ministry. He was Moderator of the Eastern Association and a member of the General Board of N.C. Baptist Convention. His fellow pastors speak of him as a believer in hard work, and good planning. They always mention his sense of humor and his feeling for people as individuals.

The Johnsons had three daughters: Kay Johnson Sewell, now deceased; Sue Johnson Little of Richmond, Va. Sue's husband, John Little,

is a realtor and they have two children, John Burke Little and Sue Ann Little. The third daughter, Ann, married Terry Holland, coach of basketball at University of Virginia. Ann and Terry live in Charlottesville, Virginia, and have two children, Kate Holland and Ann-Michael Holland.

Rev. and Mrs. Johnson retired and live in Clinton, North Carolina.

Information secured from Rev. Johnson.

### **Harold L. Hawkins, 1947-1951**

Harold L. Hawkins was born in Charlotte, N.C. on June 17, 1920, the third of five children. Graduating from Gastonia High School, Mars Hill College, and Wake Forest College, he later attended Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. There he received the B.D. Degree in 1945. While he was at Seminary he married on June 17, 1944, (his 24th birthday), Miss Margaret Anne Johnson of Lexington, Kentucky.

When Rev. Hawkins answered the call to the Spring Hope Church, he was finishing summer school at the University of Kentucky. He had served 1945-1946 for 15 months as a Chaplain in the U.S. Navy. In 1946-1947 he was Executive Director of the Home Security Council in Lexington, Kentucky.

During Rev. Hawkins' pastorate in Spring Hope, he encouraged the growth of funds with which to build the much needed Education Building. He saw that project completed and almost paid for while he was in the local church. He worked well with young people, getting Royal Ambassadors started after a long period of not having that organization. He instigated the "family night" programs of fun, fellowship, food and study. This was started after the new building was complete.

Mrs. Hawkins is remembered for her gracious charm and vivacity. Their son, Donnie, was quite small when they moved into the parsonage at 219 Nash Street. Elaine was born while they were in Spring Hope. On Sunday evening, September 26, 1948, at the age of 81, Dr. Cullom came to Spring Hope Church at Rev. Hawkins' request for a dedication service of the two Hawkins' children, Donnie and Elaine. Although she was responsible for two small children, Mrs. Hawkins was active in the church work, lending support. Rev. Hawkins had a special knack for getting his people to work. He was a big tease, always relaxed and very witty. He expected a lot from his members. They responded and gave a lot of themselves, their time, effort, interest and means.

It was with regret that the First Baptist Church accepted his resignation in 1951. He had accepted the position of Chaplain at the Rapides General Hospital in Alexandria, Louisiana. He served there for sixteen years and was a leader in Chaplaincy work in public institutions. He has completed the

N.C. Clinical Pastoral Care Program at Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem and graduated from the School of Alcohol Studies at Yale University in 1953. He has served as Chairman of the Governor's Committee on Institutional Chaplains who set standards and recruit qualified candidates for all of Louisiana's public institutions. He has been president of the Southern Baptist Chaplains Association and a member since its organization in 1952. He taught classes for ten years on such subjects as philosophy, ethics, religion, and psychology. His students were professional people. Hawkins has served numerous churches as Interim Pastor in addition to his Chaplaincy position.

Rev. and Mrs. Hawkins now live at 217 Rhoden Cove Road, Tallahassee, Florida, 32312. They have raised four sons and two daughters: Don Hawkins, Miami, Florida; Dr. Elaine Cox, Shreveport, La.; Fred Hawkins, Baton Rouge, La.; Dr. James Hawkins, Starkville, Mississippi; Mrs. Carlyn Blome, Little Rock, Arkansas, and Joe Hawkins, Tallahassee, Florida. Harold and Margaret Hawkins are the proud grandparents of seven.

Information supplied by Rev. Harold L. Hawkins, Chaplain.

### **James H. Blackmore, 1951-1961**

James H. Blackmore was born in Warsaw, N.C., on February 15, 1916. He was the son of Willis R. and Janie S. Blackmore. He received his early education in the public schools of Warsaw. James attended Wake Forest College where he graduated with a B.A. Degree, cum laude, in 1937. He went on to Colgate-Rochester Divinity School where he received his B.D. Degree in 1940. While there he was Director of Religious Education at Parsells Avenue Baptist Church, 1938-1940. He took some post-graduate work at Duke University, 1940-1941, after which he became pastor of King Baptist Church at King, N.C. from 1941-1943.

The war came along and being the conscientious person he is, he served as Chaplain (Major) in the United States Army from 1943-1946. He served in Europe. It was while he was still in service that he married Ruth Lillick. Following his tour of duty he and Mrs. Blackmore returned to North Carolina. Rev. Blackmore answered the pastorate call to Masonboro Baptist Church near Wilmington. He served there until 1949, attended the University of Iowa in the summer of 1949 and entered the University of Edinburgh in Scotland that fall to begin work on a Doctorate. He served as a supply pastor in Scotland, 1949-1951, while studying at the University. When he returned to the states in the spring of 1951, he had completed his studies and his dissertation, but had not been notified that his dissertation was acceptable. In the summer of 1951, Rev. Blackmore was asked to preach a trial sermon in the Spring Hope Church. Rev. Hawkins had

resigned. Dr. Cullom had given his name to the Pulpit Committee to contact. He was called to be the pastor, but wished to wait until October, 1951, to assume his responsibilities. He needed some time to rework the dissertation.

After accepting the pastorate at Spring Hope, Rev. Blackmore was notified that he had qualified for the Ph.D. for which he had been striving. A proper recognition service was held in the Spring Hope Church. Dr. Cullom participated, although he was then 84 years old. Dr. Blackmore remained with the Spring Hope Church until 1961. For two years, in order to stay near his family in Warsaw, he served as interim pastor of Johnson Baptist Church and also Sharon Baptist Church at Chinquapin. His sister and mother were experiencing poor health. He felt that he could be a help to them.

Dr. Blackmore became the Director of Public Relations at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary at Wake Forest where he served 1963-1969. Following that he became the Director of Publications and Special Instructor at Southeastern from 1969-1980. Blackmore was an instructor, but he was always a student. He hungered for knowledge. He attended the Princeton Institute of Theology in 1975, and did a Study Tour of Israel in 1976. In 1980, Dr. Blackmore became Associate Director of Communications and Professor of A. Divinity Studies from 1980-1984. He has served as supply preacher, interim pastor, and guest speaker in many churches, including a two months stay in Germany in 1984.

As Rev. Blackmore he received the following honors: he was named Rauschenbusch Scholar and church intern at Calvary Baptist Church, Syracuse, New York in 1939, and was President of the Wilmington, N.C. Ministerial Conference in 1948 and 1951. As Dr. Blackmore he was Moderator for the Tar River Baptist Association in 1960-61, was Secretary on the Board of Directors of *Biblical Recorder* from 1959-1962, Chairman of the Historical Commission of Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, Chairman of Diaconate, Wake Forest Baptist Church from 1965-1967 and has been listed in Who's Who in the South and Southwest since 1973.

Dr. Blackmore is a prolific writer. His first manuscript was *The Cullom Lantern*, a Biography of W.R. Cullom, published in 1963. Since 1963 he has written seven books pertaining to sermons, the Bible and Biblical history. In 1969 he published *A Reticule, A Collection of Short Stories and Essays*. In 1978 he wrote a novel, *The Wayfarer* and in 1978 another novel entitled *A Flight of Sparrows*. His most recent publication in 1984 was *Second Acts, a History of the Early Church*.

Dr. and Mrs. Blackmore have retired in Wake Forest at 209 S. Wingate Street. Their daughter, Julia Ann, born in 1955 in Spring Hope, is a practicing veterinarian in Warsaw and surrounding area. John, born in 1957, is happy farming down on the family farm in Pender County.

Information supplied by Dr. Blackmore.



### **John A. Bracey, 1962-1967**

John A. Bracey, Junior (Jack) was born March 9, 1925, in Little Rock, South Carolina. He attended public school in Winter Garden, Florida. At the age of 18 he entered the U.S. Army and served in the Infantry from 1943-1945, and saw overseas duty in Germany during World War II. After his tour of duty in the Army, he enrolled in Wake Forest College where he graduated with a B.A. Degree in 1949. The following year he married Miss Wilhelmina Wallace of Rocky Mount, North Carolina. Rev. Bracey then attended Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. There he graduated in 1952 with a B.D. Degree. The Braceys were the parents of five children: Alice, John, Bill, David and Mary Bracey.

Rev. Bracey served the First Baptist Church of Goldsboro in the summer of 1950. When he finished the work at the Seminary he served First Baptist at Maxton, N.C., 1952-1955; Double Springs Baptist, Shelby, 1955-1961, after which he came to First Baptist at Spring Hope and pastored 1962-1968. Upon leaving Spring Hope the Braceys moved to a community near Winston-Salem. Rev. Bracey was pastor there at Immanuel Baptist Church (now Pfafftown Baptist) 1968-1974. In 1974 he accepted the pulpit at Weldon Baptist Church in Weldon and is the present minister there.

Information supplied by Rev. Jack Bracey.

### **John Reinhardt Link, 1968-1973**

John Reinhardt Link was born in Lincoln County, North Carolina, to John Robert Link and his wife, Lecky-Lawing Link in 1907. He was one of eight children, having five brothers and two sisters. As a child he attended Reeves two-room school on the side of Little Mountain. This was a grammar school. He was graduated from Maiden High School at Maiden, N.C. Following graduation he attended Duke University for one year, then transferred to Wake Forest College. He graduated from Wake Forest College in 1931 with a B.A. Degree, cum laude, majoring in English and Greek. In 1935 he received the B.D. Degree at Crozer Theological Seminary, Chester, Pennsylvania. Rev. Link studied post graduate courses at Southeastern Theological Seminary in 1966-1967.

After receiving the B.D. from Crozer in 1935, Rev. Link married Miss Clarice Elizabeth Pritchard of Elizabeth City, N.C. in 1937. They have two children: Jane Elizabeth Link Fleming, born in 1941, and John Pritchard Link, born in 1944. They are the proud grandparents of six grandchildren.

The pastorates held by Rev. Link were all in North Carolina. He served in Camden County, Cashie Baptist of Windsor, Apex Baptist, Mars Hill College, Mount Gilead Baptist and Warrenton Baptist. He came to Spring



Hope First Baptist from Warrenton in 1968 and retired from active ministry in Spring Hope in 1973. He was Interim Pastor at Roper, N.C., Cypress Chapel, and became Pastor at Stanhope Baptist Church in 1975 and is presently serving that church.

Rev. Link also taught while active in pastorates. He taught German at Chowan College, Bible at Apex High School, Bible at Mars Hill College, Bible at Louisburg College, Language and Math at Pitt Technical Institute, Communications at Nash Tech, and college level courses for Seminary Extension until the present.

He has published two books by Judson Press; *You Can Understand the Bible*, c. 1965 and *Help in Understanding the Bible*, c. 1974. He has written articles for journals, book reviews and columns for newspapers. He is at present working on the History of the Link Family, a book of prayers, and a book, *Beyond the Literal*.

Among the honors received, he is included in several biographical journals, Marquis' *Who's Who in Religion*, *Who's Who Among Contemporary Authors*, *Personalities of the South*, *Dictionary of International Biography*, and *Two Thousand Men of Achievement*.

He and Mrs. Link retired in Spring Hope. She continued to direct the music program of the First Baptist Church until 1988, a position she had held for some twenty years. The Spring Hope Church is noted in the area for its consistent program of exceptionally good music. The community is proud to have them living in Spring Hope.

Information supplied by Rev. Link.

### **James B. Hopper, 1973-1975**

James B. Hopper was born November 14, 1937, to Joseph Baxter Hopper and his wife, Daphne Hunt Hopper, Shelby, North Carolina. Jim was one of two children. His brother was two years his senior.

Young Jim attended elementary and high school at Polkville and went on to attend Gardner-Webb Junior College where he received the Associate of Arts Degree. Following Gardner-Webb, he attended Limestone College. There he received the Bachelor of Arts Degree. He earned the Master of Divinity Degree at Southern Baptist Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, graduating in 1965. The following year, 1966, he did post-graduate work at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary at Wake Forest, N.C.

While in Seminary at Louisville, Hopper served three student pastorates, one in Delaware, Ohio, one in Columbus, Indiana, and one at Brandenburg, Kentucky, near Fort Knox. He also worked for a year at the Louisville Correctional Home for minor delinquents. His first year in Seminary (1961-1962) he worked with the Kentucky Temperance League,

going to different churches every Sunday. He says that he saw most of Kentucky during that year.

In the fall of 1962 Mr. Hopper met Wilma Rice. They were married in May, 1963. Their first pastorate after Seminary was the Mine Road Baptist Church in Spotsylvania County, Virginia. The problems there were great. The Hoppers felt they could not bring reconciliation to the factions so they resigned at the end of 1965 and did the year's study at Southeastern Seminary. In the meantime he had applied for a Commission in the Navy as a Chaplain. He had the support of the Baptist Home Mission Board, but no commissions were available at the time. As a result, they accepted the pastorate of Greenpond Baptist Church, a rural church at Chatham, Virginia.

Having had no children they decided in 1968 to adopt Elizabeth Ann (Beth) at eighteen days old. Twenty-two months later they adopted Daphne Lynn, five days old. The day the social worker brought Daphne to the Hopper home, they discovered they were pregnant with Marcus Tomes. They stayed at Greenpond four and a half years, then moved to Roanoke, Virginia, to serve eighteen months as Assistant Pastor of Villa Heights Baptist Church. Rev. Hopper wanted experience in a larger church which happened to be Spring Hope. He contacted Dr. Robert Bruhn at the N.C. Baptist Convention office for assistance in moving back into the N.C. pastorate. After several weeks Bruhn wrote and asked Rev. Hopper if he had heard from Maurice Parrish of Spring Hope. He had not. A few days later Mr. Parrish called by phone and invited the Hoppers to drive down to Spring Hope to meet with the Pulpit Committee. He became the pastor of First Baptist in April, 1973.

During the Hopper pastorate many were led to the Lord, the church was growing spiritually and was becoming very lively in its praise. However, the Hoppers were led by the Lord to Lee Street Baptist Church in Danville, Virginia, where they served about two and a half years. In 1978, Hoppers taught in a Christian School. In 1980, they moved to Asheboro, N.C., where he served in the Randolph County Prison as a Substance Abuse Counselor as part of the Randolph County Mental Health Center outreach. In 1982 Rev. Hopper transferred his ordination from the Southern Baptist to the Assemblies of God. Then in June, 1983, he and the family moved to Richmond, Virginia. They had already begun in April, 1983, to pioneer an Assembly of God church there. They began services July 10th with nineteen charter members. There they served for four and a half years, acquired nineteen acres of property and paid off the debt except \$7,000.00 by the time they left in August of 1987. In November they began to pioneer a new work in Providence Forge, Va., planting new churches. They have been busy building the Heritage Full Gospel Church.

In 1988 Rev. Hopper and son Marcus, age 17, flew to Haiti to assist in building a church building in three weeks and to serve on an evangelism team to conduct nightly crusades. Wilma is training for Christian Counseling in family relationships and personal problems. Marcus is open to being called into full time ministry. Daphne is in her first year at V.C.U. in Richmond, working toward a degree in music with emphasis on the flute and piano. She earned a Music Scholarship. Beth is a third year student at Virginia Tech at Blacksburg, Virginia, majoring in Social Sciences.

The Hoppers seem to be leading exciting lives in their service as ministers.

Information supplied courtesy of Rev. James B. Hopper.

### **Allen C. Allen, 1976-1982**

Since Rev. Allen failed to provide any details about his early history, it has been gathered by bits and pieces. He was thirty-two years old when he came to the First Baptist Church in Spring Hope in May, 1976. Deduction would place his birth year in 1944. His father was a Baptist minister who preached the first revival after Allen assumed the local pastorate. His father's name was Rev. Layman Allen, of Henderson, Kentucky. Since Allen was ordained in his home church, Immanuel Baptist in Henderson, Kentucky in 1967 at the age of 23, it is believed that Rev. Layman Allen was pastor of that church.

According to Rev. Allen Allen's resume he graduated in 1967 from the University of Evansville in Evansville, Indiana, with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Speech. He had served as pastor, 1965-1967, at Waverly Baptist Mission in Waverly, Kentucky. This was a rural mission of the Morganfield Baptist Church, Morganfield, Kentucky.

It is not certain, but he is believed to have served his country in the U.S. Marines as a Chaplain from 1967-1973. His first pastorate of a regular church was Brassfield Baptist in Creedmoor, N.C., 1973-1974. He then became Associate Pastor at Lakeside Baptist, 1974-1976, in Rocky Mount, serving with Pastor Dr. Gaylord Lehman. In 1976 Rev. Allen accepted the ministry to the Spring Hope First Baptist Church. He was already working toward the Doctor of Ministry Degree at Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest when he accepted the Spring Hope pastorate. It seems he still had the dissertation to complete. He had already received the Masters of Divinity with languages (Greek and Hebrew) in 1975. He did Clinical Pastoral Care in 1975 through Southeastern at Wake Medical Center in Raleigh. By 1979 he had completed studies in Advanced Clinical Pastoral Education through Southeastern at the Life Enrichment Center in Raleigh. In the summers of 1981 and 1982 he participated in Biblical Archeological Digs in Tel Dan,

Israel, through Southeastern and through Hebrew Union College, New York, New York. It seems that he took learning advantages at every opportunity.

Allen also found time to serve the Baptists in the Association, was active in the Rocky Mount Chapter of Red Cross, Mental Health and Viet Nam Veteran concerns, devoted much time to CONTACT telephone ministries for Nash and Edgecombe Counties, and received the N.C. Governor's Award for Volunteer Work in 1980. He was active locally with Cub Scouts, Lions, Little League, and Senior High football teams. On a personal level he enjoyed handball, tennis and golf. It can be said that he was not an idle man, but he wanted to get back into service as a Chaplain with the Marine Corps.

Allen was age 32 when he came to Spring Hope in 1976. He and his lovely wife, Terri, moved into the parsonage with their two sons, Joshua, 8, and Jacob, 5, and lived among the people until late 1982.

Information supplied by Rev. Allen Allen.

### **James W. Creech, 1983 -**

James W. Creech was born in Blackville, South Carolina, November 6, 1944, the son of Mr. and Mrs. B.F. Creech. They were members of First Baptist Church, Blackville, and were farmers and merchants. Jimmy was brought up in the church and from his earliest memories, God, Jesus Christ, and the Church were important in his life. His mother read Bible stories and his training in Sunday School and Sunbeams combined to make him aware that the church was a central, important activity in life. Both his parents were faithful, active, and supportive church members in quiet serving ways. It was quite natural that Jimmy accepted Jesus as his Saviour when he was eight years old. He matured in his faith quite a lot in the next few years.

Jimmy's father died of cancer when young Creech was only thirteen. It followed that the men in the family and in the church became important role models for him. He looked to his three older brothers, his uncles, his pastors, Sunday School teachers, and R.A. leaders for guidance. He graduated from Blackville High School, attending church regularly knowing its importance to him and to his family. Yet he felt no real commitment in serving God or maturing in the Christian faith. He went on to Clemson University where he graduated in 1968 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Forestry. He had completed the Reserve Officer's Training Course at Clemson and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Air Force. He then completed a one year program in Meteorology at the University of Texas at Austin. Mr. Creech was married in August, 1966, while he was still a student at Clemson University. He married Miss Margaret (Peggy)



Elizabeth Martin, who has been a strong partner and a catalyst in his development and ministry.

Captain Creech served as an Air Weather Officer for twelve and a half years. While in the service he completed the Masters Degree in Guidance and Counseling through the University of Colorado. During his Air Force career, Captain Creech served in Texas, South Carolina, the Phillipines, Idaho, Germany and Florida.

Although his career in the military took him and his family to many far-away places, the church always was there whenever they needed the fellowship and ministry of believers. It was in a strong church and fellowship in West Germany that Captain Creech felt God calling him to a deeper commitment. In Panama City, Florida, he yielded to God to serve in any ways he was needed. By the fall of 1979 he was serving as a Sunday School teacher and an R.A. leader. Shortly thereafter he became a Deacon and an R.A. Director. These opportunities called him further into a desire to minister for the Lord. After nearly two years of soul searching he felt a clear call to get out of the Air Force and enter the Seminary. He gave up his commission in November, 1980, and entered Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina, in January, 1981. There he and his family became members of Wake Forest Baptist Church. Creech served as R.A. leader and became a member of the church Membership Committee.

Since he had never preached, he was uncomfortable doing so until he completed courses in sermon preparation and delivery. Afterwards he began to do some supply preaching and definitely felt led into the pastorate. Dr. Blackmore was teaching in the Associate Program for men who had no college degrees while Creech was in the Masters of Divinity Program. In October-November, 1982, prior to graduation in May, he prepared his resume and shared this special time in his life with other members of the Membership Committee of Wake Forest Baptist Church and with new candidates for church membership. Mrs. Ruth Blackmore was serving on the same committee. One Sunday morning following the sermon and invitation, while standing in line to welcome new church members, Ruth asked Creech if he would like Dr. Blackmore to take his resume to Spring Hope the following Sunday. Dr. Blackmore was serving the Spring Hope pulpit while the Pulpit Committee was searching for a regular pastor.

Creech related that he was overjoyed and ecstatic, saying that God works in mysterious ways. Through the Creech prayers and the prayers of First Baptist Church at Spring Hope, God brought the two of them together as pastor and church.

To follow up on the resume, Spring Hope Church invited Jimmy Creech to preach a trial sermon on January 23, 1983, and was called to fill



the pulpit on a regular basis. The following Sunday, January 30, 1983, was Baptist Men's Day in the Spring Hope Church. Dr. Blackmore and Mr. Creech attended the day service on that day. Creech began his work as pastor in earnest on February 10, 1983. Since he had not been ordained, a committee was named to arrange the examination and ordination service for March 6, 1983. Rev. Creech graduated from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary at Wake Forest, N.C. with a Master of Divinity Degree in May, 1983.

Rev. Creech and his wife, Peggy, have three children: James W. Creech, Jr., who is a scholarship student at Campbell University; Candace Creech, who is a sophomore at Southern Nash Senior High; and Dustin Creech, who is in the fifth grade in the Spring Hope public school. Mrs. Creech teaches math in the public schools of Franklin County. She has been taking extension work from Campbell University toward completion of requirements for the Master of Education Degree in Applied Math in 1988.

Each individual in the Creech family is industrious and studious. They are a definite asset to the First Baptist Church and the community of Spring Hope.

Information supplied by Rev. Creech.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

# Summary

### Organization

The church was organized in 1889 with less than ten members, but God added the increase. Today there are 225 active members. The first need was a pastor to provide inspiration and leadership. Although services were held only once a month in the beginning, the spirit of the Lord created a cohesive group who worked in the name of Christianity. Today there is still inspiration and leadership provided by a pastor who inspires from the pulpit every Sunday, from prayer service every Wednesday and by excellent pastoral care for the sick, suffering and sorrowing during the week.

Aside from inspiration, it was felt that the church should keep records of the membership acceptance and withdrawal and of the various activities of the united group. A clerk was named for that post and that position is active and effective to this day. The church was organized on the principle of democracy, one man—one vote. A lone Deacon was named to present issues from the laity to the body of members for consideration. The decision of the membership was enacted. Today there are nine Deacons who hear recommendations and requests. They consider, discuss, and decide whether it is of enough importance to present to the church for acceptance or rejection. The Deacons are the arteries through which the energy of the church flows.

In 1889 a Sunday School Superintendent was named to direct Bible study for all ages. This was training beyond the sermons from the pulpit. The school met every Sunday afternoon in cooperation with students from Gibson Memorial Methodist Church. Today the study sessions are held each Sunday morning in the Education Building one hour prior to the church worship service. Each church has its own training program.

Song leaders and accompanists were chosen from those who attended the services during the early years. A pump organ was the accompanying

instrument and was not acquired for some time. Today there is a paid Choir Director, a paid Organist, who plays an electronic organ, and a volunteer Children's Choir Director and piano accompanist.

Affiliation with the Tar River Association in 1890 placed the Spring Hope Church with a group which had the same Christian goals and responsibilities. This met only once a year, but new ideas were gained, leadership in the work provided, and encouragement to augment the scope of activities. Ideas gained there broadened the horizons of the local Baptists and strengthened their united endeavors. In 1989 the Spring Hope Baptist Church has developed by persistence, determination, faith, and prayer, into a highly organized, motivated church. Not only is it organized at the local and Association levels, it is associated with the North Carolina Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention. It participates with their programs which reach all over the world.

Today there are a few paid workers. There were none in 1889. The bulk of the work of the church is done by volunteers. Those who are paid are part-time workers, namely: the Secretary, Choir Director, Organist, Youth Director, and the Janitor. The officers that are volunteers are the Clerk, the Treasurer, the Sunday School Director, the Vacation Bible School Director, the Trustees, and the Deacons. They give their time, talents, and efforts to the maintenance, growth and development of the total church program.

## Volunteers

There are varieties of responsibilities incorporated in membership in the church. These are deeds which require thought, time, and effort, but which are seldom remembered as being important. Every effort for God's work is precious in His sight. It takes every small effort to assist in producing the larger result. There are those who are unable physically to give effort, but are able and willing to pray for success, to witness in God's name, and to support with material gifts. Prayer, witness, and gifts have been the bonds of endurance that have produced First Baptist Church as it is today. Much can be said for those few people who in 1889 had the faith and vision that God would help them to establish such a church.

There have been myriads of workers who have helped to achieve the growth and development of this church. Each person who has been associated with First Baptist for any period of time is part of its history. It would be impossible and impractical to try to name each person who has served as a volunteer. It has taken the doers as well as the listeners, the constant and the inconstant, the custodians as well as the users, the learners

and the teachers working together for the common good and for God's purpose.

The many volunteer services that have been rendered through the years are:

Bell ringers, sextons, custodians for Communion services, custodians for Baptismal services, givers, counters, depositors, budget planners, pulpit committees, flower committees, decorators, hostesses, cooks, kitchen supervisors, cleaners, grass cutters, librarians, memorial committees, music committees, nominating committees, teachers, building committees, nursery coordinators, tape ministers, ushers, van use committees, youth advisors, World Hunger committees, worship committees, choir members, associate directors, associate teachers, circle leaders, Sunday School pianists and associates, the recorders of gifts, and perhaps many more.

The church has been made stronger through the sharing of responsibilities. Thank God for each individual, each supporter, who, in a very special way, has become a part of its history.

## **The Women at Work**

Women's work was begun in the early years of the church before Missionary Societies were formed. They organized themselves into a group called the Ladies' Aid Society. They were very active in local missions, visiting on behalf of the church, ministering to material needs, visiting the sick and sorrowing, and offering support for the men of the church. Women were not at that time eligible to vote in matters of the church. That was an interesting finding since women have contributed so much toward the success of First Baptist Church. Male members only were counted at church conference. The roll was called for males only. A woman was not named in conference meeting until September, 1908, when "Sister Albert F. May and Sister Dollie Tunnell" were asked to accompany two men to go around to call on the members in order to see what each would give towards the preacher's salary. What each gave was read quarterly at Conference. If one failed to pay, that member would be called before the assembly for explanation.

The women may not have been in the foreground of church activities at first, but it is certain that through the years, they have been the strength of it. The Ladies' Aid members taught the Sunday School classes, improved the appearance of the church, made monies to bring about improvements and supported the efforts of their men who were the leaders. Their



progressive ideas were supported most often by the men. They were a force not to be ignored.

By 1908, Mrs. M.H. Privette moved to Spring Hope with her husband and children. That year she started a Sunbeam Band for children in her home on Railroad Street. This was the beginning of mission study, prayer and support in the local Baptist Church. By 1913, the Woman's Missionary Union was functioning. Dues were ten cents per month. The names of twenty-three members were found. Mrs. Privette was President and Mrs. J.A. Marshbourne was Secretary. They gave \$74.40 that first year for missionary work. Today the Woman's Missionary Union is a strong force in the mission work of the church. Mrs. Tommy May is the local President.

According to legend, the women raised the funds to pay for the carpeting in the new brick church and to buy Collection plates in 1910. They are said also to have raised \$1,000.00 toward the cost of the new church and paid it within that year.

The women have seen from the beginning that flowers were arranged for worship service and special occasions. Mrs. Ben Morgan placed them there without fail for over thirty years. Mrs. Roland Geddie has served on that committee for over thirty years and still serves. Great is their faithfulness!

It was not until the mid-thirties that women were elcted to serve as Deacons. Liberal-minded Dr. Cullom had said frequently "If you want a thing done, ask the women to do it." He suggested that since they were so active in church activities, that he felt they were qualified to act as Deacons. Mrs. Nick Collie is said to have been the first. Today a better balance on the Board of Deacons is maintained. The term of office is three years. There are nine Deacons.

No record of early Trustees was located wherein women served in that capacity. In a Deed, dated March 28, 1950, Mrs. Lillian J. Wood was designated as a Trustee for Spring Hope Baptist Church. Since that time women have shared Trustee responsibilities.

Today women serve in nearly every area of church activity. They are capable of holding any position of responsibility in its operation. They have been a vital force for growth and success and continue in those efforts with a willing spirit of faith and cooperation. They have accepted changes, maintaining their dedication and commitment.

It has taken both men and women working together as a cohesive group to accomplish the successful nurturing of the seeds of faith that were planted one hundred years ago. It will be necessary to work together for good in the future for the glory of God.

## Music

Music is part of worship. There must have been many who served as music leaders. Music was alluded to in Conference minutes of 1920 when the pump organ was sold to Peachtree Baptist Church. The piano was used for accompaniment until 1937 when a Hammond Electric Organ was purchased during Dr. Cullom's pastorate.

The music program has been of exceptionally high quality throughout the years. It was not until 1962 that music training was broadened to include all ages from Beginners to Senior Adult Choir members. There had been sporadic efforts that were not sustained. Mrs. Bracey, wife of the pastor, 1962-1967, began teaching Beginner, Primary, Junior, Intermediate, and Adult Choirs during Rev. Bracey's pastorate. The choirs were recognized as being the best church music groups in the area. Dignified, classical music was used in all instances.

Nearly every home had a piano. Music was important in the home. Girls were trained in piano, boys to play an instrument. All were taught to appreciate quality in music. The church has always chosen to use quality music. The question arises. What is the program's future? Radio, stereo, tape recorder, television, and audio tapes have taken the place of music training for most young people. They are not being taught the fundamentals of music and its varying qualities. When they are ready physically to go into the choir, they are unprepared in the knowledge and appreciation of appropriate church music. This is a general statement and does not include every home, but it is prevalent. Those conditions are not conducive to the continuation of an outstanding music program. The church is blessed to have Jean Womble and Pauline Perry who are working faithfully with as many children of Primary age as they can get to join the Children's Choir. They are helping those young ones to learn the discipline it takes and the knowledge that good music demands. Those who participate will have a greater affinity towards good music than those who do not.

Mrs. John Link directed the Adult Choir for some twenty years with dignity and excellent music. Mrs. G.C. Lassiter, organist for thirty-four years, left a standard toward which to strive. Today Mrs. Sylvia Sutter, Choir Director, and Mrs. Martha Crowell, Organist, have some wonderful goals to aspire to. The church should be concerned about the future of its music program as it strives to continue a music program that lends dignity to the church services they so richly deserve. Congregational participation in the morning worship hymns is improving and the future promises to be interesting. "Let us make a joyful noise unto the Lord."

## Finally

The basic thrust of First Baptist Church, Spring Hope, N.C., has been to fulfill the innate need of individuals to worship in Christian fellowship with others who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Creator, as Saviour and Lord of all the earth and its peoples. There has been strong purpose to worship harmoniously and joyously with one another. At the same time the duties of witnessing, teaching, singing, learning, praying, giving, and sharing the Gospel news throughout the world have been the caring concerns of the members. Looking into the history of this church, it is evident that the work has been of a very high quality.

The pastors have been dedicated men who have helped to challenge members to reach high potentials and to be all that they can be. They have been unusually well educated in ministerial leadership and Christian values. Having Wake Forest College and Southeastern Baptist Seminary close by has been a decided advantage in securing well-trained leaders.

The members from the first have had a will to work, made the time to pray, cared enough to give, reached out to comfort and encourage, determined to study, and have had the energy to build. Mission support, coupled with mission study and mission prayers, has become very strong among the membership. Although it was confined to local needs in the early years, it has expanded today to encompass the world. Prayer has been a vital part of its ministry. The spirit of prayer pervades the church. It has fostered a caring attitude that is becoming a positive characteristic.

Music has been outstanding in quality and participation. The Directors have been well-trained musicians. The Choirs have gained wide recognition as superior groups. Throughout the past hundred years music has been a magnet that drew worshippers to the Lord's house.

Women were not allowed a voice in the business of the church for many years at the outset. Today they fill any and every position the church has in its program. They have become a force which cannot be denied. Dr. Cullom once said, "If you want something accomplished, call on the ladies." That holds true in First Baptist Church.

The Young People have had every advantage to learn and to grow in Christian service. They have learned much by example and by practice. Today the members have declined, but this seems to be the effect of sociological changes in families which are smaller.

The local church has come a long way since 1889. What it is today, it has not always been. Rather it has been becoming through supporting

Gospel concerns, by Christian caring for one another in love, and by a supportive helping spirit. It has been strengthened by faith and prayer. All of these characteristics can be found to relate directly to the events of its history.





## CHAPTER NINE

# Challenge for the Future

*What we are we have been becoming  
We can trace our Gospel concern, our  
love and fellowship, caring for others,  
and our determination for the future  
to definite events in our history.*

—UNKNOWN

When asked to write about the church's challenge for the future, thoughts hurriedly scattered along many different paths. The many scriptural calls to ministry by the Holy Spirit helped to clarify and lead to the words God would challenge the church with for its next one hundred years.

Thoughts went back to the days surrounding the church's organization on December 30, 1889. Our "founding fathers" must have felt a great sense of spiritual calling for the immediate future. Thoughts about 1988 probably never entered their minds. Their mission was to establish a church in Spring Hope and begin a growing ministry here.

Time moved at a much slower pace then. Today, this church stands at a point in time that looks back over 100 years and looks expectantly and enthusiastically toward a second century of ministry and service for the Lord. To God be the glory for the great things He has done and will do through the people of this church! Time seems to move at a much more rapid pace these days. Still, the span of 100 years is exactly the same. A century is a long time. Only one or two babies born this year will live that long.

Therefore, as our "founding fathers" did in 1889, so must the church begin in 1989 its ministry for a second 100 years. This ministry begins one day at a time. The church, through its members, ministers in countless ways and has great potential for blessing God's ever-increasing Kingdom day by day, year by year.

Where do we begin? What is the challenge for us today, and tomorrow, and even 100 years from now? Matthew records this challenge very clearly in the words of Jesus: "Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20, Good News Bible).

The church's challenge is to live each and every day so that others may come to know Jesus as Lord and Saviour and grow more spiritually mature by following Him more closely. How does one do that?

In order to meet the church's challenge, our Lord's commission to us, there must be a commitment on the part of the members. The first commitment is to serving the Lord through the church. One must first be available to God for His use and service in and through the church. Pastors are needed who will lead and preach the Word of God. Deacons are needed who will minister to families and share the leadership spiritually with the pastor. Sunday School teachers are needed who are concerned for class members and their learning from the Bible and about their relationships to one another and Jesus Christ. Not everyone will be a deacon or teacher. However, every member can be a faithful member, committed to the church's programs and overall ministry. Every member can serve the Lord by being a living, vital part of the church's ministry. Someone on the Kitchen Committee or Hostess Committee or the Church Sexton may not see their ministry as being that important. But the fact is, every person, every position, every part helps to make the overall ministry of the church more effective or less effective according to the way in which one serves the Lord.

Every member can also serve the Lord through faithful attendance in worship and Bible study, prayer support, and a growing stewardship which expresses a deepening love for God through tithes and offerings. In all these the challenge is in recognizing all the good blessings of our Lord and responding to Him out of love and a deep commitment to service through the church.

A second part of our challenge is a commitment to nurturing a spiritual growth in the present members and their families. This grows, quite naturally, out of love and commitment to serve the Lord. If the church is to nurture its own, children and adults need to be taught the Bible in Sunday School and through music, mission organizations, and all other programs of the church. It must be sensitive to personal commitment and ministry in the church. Shared rejoicing in the birth of children, celebration of birthdays, weddings, and anniversaries, or success in school, professionally, vocationally, or otherwise, helps every member grow in the knowledge of the blessings of the Lord.

A very special time for nurturing is during illness or death of loved ones. Perhaps, as at no other time, the church, through its members, ministers in the name of the Lord as it seeks to help heal the sick and bereaved. Not only are the immediate church family members ministered to, but the church's witness through ministry extends in far-reaching circles to family and friends from communities both near and far. Even the lives of doctors, nurses, and other hospital technicians and acquaintances in many other professions may be affected through some simple, kind and loving act in these special times.

But perhaps the greatest challenge is within the church family's hurt and disappointed who have fallen out of fellowship. Some have separated themselves from the church through apathy and non-participation. Every pastor and active member should have a sincere desire to help heal these wounds and to encourage out-of-fellowship members to become alive again and involved actively in the church. Why would we have this desire? Perhaps it is because we realize that we stand in a very important place and time in the life of the community and in the lives of people. The church is representative of Jesus Christ. We fail Him when we do not nurture even our own. Our challenge is to help one another grow to a spiritual maturity under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Children and adults should be able to read and interpret God's Word with the help of the Holy Spirit. Pastors, teachers, and all church members have a responsibility and a very vital part in insuring that the church's teaching and learning atmosphere and programs are such that the spiritual growth of every member is as good as is humanly possible.

Ultimately, the spiritual growth and nurture of the church's members can result in commitment and love for the Lord and for the church in ever-deepening degrees. The challenge is to grow a church people more spiritually mature. Such maturity allows members to rejoice in all the joys and blessings of life, to share in burdens and sorrows, to agree and disagree with Christian love and understanding and with continued commitment to the church, and to love and forgive one another in a nurturing spirit, so that God's witness continues strong in our church and community.

Our third challenge is in reaching out to others in the community. The first two challenges deal with our own. We must do a better job on these if we are going to have an impact on reaching others for Christ or to have them come into our church for membership. However, we cannot afford to wait until we feel everything is right before reaching out to others. Our Lord's commission and our challenge is before us every day. We need to tell others about Christ. We need to tell others about our church. We need to tell them we have a place for them here and a ministry they can do for the Lord in our church. We need to tell them we have Bible study for adults and children.

We need to tell others about our prayer times together. We need to tell them that our music praises the Lord God. We need to tell them we are a loving, forgiving, and nurturing church that is open to them and others who want to join our fellowship and ministry through Jesus Christ.

Quite naturally we think of telling by word of mouth. This is truly necessary. However, the words that speak loudest are the actual everyday living experiences demonstrated to others. Every Sunday the church leaves the walls of physical facilities to become the church dispersed throughout the community. The church is found on the farm, in the factory, in the schools, in the hospitals, in the Lion's Club, in the Town Commissioners, and every other facet of life. The church is found in professional, vocational, family and recreational circles all through the community. The church becomes the "salt and light" bringing Christian influence to all phases of life and activity in the community. Christ's challenge is ever with us!

It is an honor to follow in a long line of pastors to serve this church as minister and particularly at this very special time. You and I are privileged to serve and bear witness for our Lord through this church. Great leaders have gone out into other communities as Christian businessmen and women, doctors, and lawyers. Several pastors have influenced not only the lives of people in Spring Hope but also students at Wake Forest College and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Our challenge for the future is to continue building upon what has already been accomplished and to expand our efforts even further in carrying out our Lord's Great Commission. One hundred years from now another Church Historian may be writing a book similar to this one. To a very large degree, the history of the 200 year old church depends upon how well we respond to meeting this challenge. Let us begin, today, the challenge that is before us. What better way to begin than by saying to the Lord: "I am available to serve, work, minister, live in any way You desire so that our church can be the best representative possible of your Son, Jesus Christ. Give me faith, even as small as a mustard seed, knowing that I can do all things through you. And resting on the knowledge that you will always be with me, to help and guide, to strengthen and provide all that I need to serve you as you would have me to do." We have a great message to tell to others and a great challenge and potential. Let us begin today!

Great thanks are due to Lena Morgan for her many hours of dedication and work of love contained in this history. And as the Apostle Paul thanked his fellow Christian workers, all pastors and lay people of the church's first 100 years are thanked for the church we have today. One hundred years from now, may another group of Christians identified as First Baptist Church of Spring Hope also look back upon a century of work bringing

honor and glory to God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

James W. Creech, Pastor  
First Baptist Church

August 9, 1988  
Spring Hope, N.C.





## APPENDIX A

# Articles of Faith - 1889

The Christian church is founded on Christ's revelation of God's final message for mankind. It is one of the most enduring and permanent institutions in history. The church was here before these walls were erected by our forbears.

The Articles of Faith contained in Hiscox' *Baptist Church Directory* were adopted December 29, 1889, at the organization meeting of the Spring Hope Baptist Church.

These are as follows:

p.543 et seq. *The New Directory of Baptist Churches*, by Edward T. Hiscox, c.1894, the Judson Press, Philadelphia, PA.

### Articles of Faith

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore, is and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions shall be tried.

We believe the Scriptures teach that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite intelligent Spirit, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of Heaven and Earth; that in the unity of the Godhead, there are three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, equal in divine perfection, executing distinct, but harmonious influence in the great work of redemption.

We believe the Scriptures teach the fall of man, the way of grace, the ways of salvation, of repentance, of faith, of justification, of adoption, and of sanctification. It teaches the law and the gospel of what a Christian Church is and the gospel of Christian Baptism.

## Covenant - Hiscox - 1889

Having been, as we trust, brought by divine grace to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ, and to give ourselves wholly to Him, we do now solemnly and joyfully covenant with each other, to walk together in Him, with brotherly love, to His Glory, as our Common Lord. We do, therefore, in His strength, engage:

That we will exercise a Christian care and watchfulness over each other, and faithfully warn, exhort, and admonish each other as occasion may require:

That we will not forsake the assembly of ourselves together, but will uphold the public worship of God, and the ordinances of His house:

That we will not omit closet and family religion at home, nor neglect the great duty of religiously training our children, and those under our care, for the service of Christ, and the enjoyment of heaven:

That, as we are the light of the world, and salt of the earth, we will seek divine aid to enable us to deny ungodliness, and every worldly lust, and to walk circumspectly in the world, that we may win the souls of men:

That we will contribute cheerfully of our property, according as God has prospered us, for the maintenance of a faithful and evangelical ministry among us, for the support of the poor, and to spread the Gospel over the earth:

That we will in all conditions, even until death, strive to live to the Glory of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

And may the God of Peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do His will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ; to whom be Glory forever and ever. Amen.

## **Revised Church Covenant Used 1989**

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior,

And on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,

We do now, in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort;

To promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines;

To contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations. We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances;

To walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment;

To avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger;

To abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Saviour.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love;

To remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech;

To be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Saviour to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

## Deed to Property

Deed Book 85 - page 426, Nash County Register of Deeds  
office, Nashville Courthouse, N.C. J.H. Hunter to Deacons of  
Spring Hope M.B. Church

State of North Carolina

Nash County

This Deed made by Jno. H. Hunter of the one part, to Jno. T. Fulford, Spencer W. Wheless and Henry B. Ferrell, witnesseth that the said Jno. H. Hunter for and in consideration of the sum of one dollar, the receipt whereof is acknowledged; hath bargained and sold and by these presents, doth transfer and convey to the said Jno. T. Fulford, Spencer W. Wheless and Henry B. Ferrell, deacons of the Spring Hope Baptist Church and their successors in office, the following real property viz: Lots N 23, 24 and 25, in the survey of the Town of Spring Hope, as recorded in Book 73 at page 474, Register's Office, Nash County, to which reference is had and described as follows viz: Beginning at a stake corner of Nash and Walnut Streets and runs with Nash Street south S.47 1/2 degrees W. 141 feet to stake on alley, Thence with said alley S. 42 1/2 degrees E. to a stake in Bridgers alley, Thence with Bridgers alley N.47 1/2 E. 141 feet to stake on Walnut Street, Thence with Walnut Street 141 feet to beginning. To have and to hold said lands to the said John T. Fulford, Spencer W. Wheless and Henry B. Ferrell and their successors in office upon the following uses, and none other: That is to say they shall hold the same free from all liens whether caused by mechanics, laborers, or their own obligations and shall have perpetual succession so long as the same shall be used for services of the Missionary Baptist Church, Provided however that whenever said lands shall not be used for the purposes herein specified it shall go in fee simple to B.H. Bunn and his heirs and assigns, as I hold the same in trust for him. Witness my hand and seal, this 31st day of December, 1894.

Signed J.H. Hunter

Witness:

B.H. Bunn

North Carolina

Jan. 7th 1895

Nash County

The execution of the foregoing deed was duly proven before me by B.H. Bunn, the witness thereto. Let the deed and the certificate be registered.

M.B. Williford

Clerk Sup. Court

Filed for registration, Jan.8th, 1895

J.H.T. Baker, Reg.Deeds

W.C. Collection / UNC-CH Library



## APPENDIX B

Membership at the end of one year: 1890

Mrs. Henrietta Octavia Cone, Dec. 27, 1889  
 John A. Bridges, Dec. 29, 1889  
 Spencer Wheless, Dec. 29, 1889  
 W.H. Culpepper, Dec. 29, 1889  
 Mrs. Mamie Bergeron, March 23, 1890  
 Mrs. Emily Wheless, March 23, 1890  
 J.J. Spivey, July 22, 1890  
 George W. Bunn, July 23, 1890  
 George W. Joyner, August 23, 1890  
 Mrs. Eudora M. Owen, October, 1890  
 Mrs. Katie Bunn, October, 1890  
 Mrs. Ella Joyner, October, 1890

Members of First Baptist Church prior to the erection of the Brick Church, 1909-1910. These were the names and admission dates recorded in the 1900-1909 minutes of the church. Some had died or moved away, but these were current members.

Adams, C.A. 4/16/1899	Bullock, Geo. O., 1900
Aiken, Mrs. W.H. 3/21/1897	Bullock, Mrs. Nannie, 1900
Bailey, Mrs. Ella, 1899	Bunn, D.A., 1899
Bailey, Susie, 1904	*Bunn, George W., 1890
Baines, Mrs. M.A., 1901	Bunn, Grace, 1908
Ball, Rev. C.T. , 1899	*Bunn, Mrs. Katie O., 1890
Barber, Mrs. C.B., 1893	Bunn, J.A., 1899
Barber, Miss Nannie, 1893	Chappell, D.L., 1901
Batchelor, George G., 1900	Chappell, Mrs. E.T., 1901
Beddingfield, Moses, 1908	Christman, A.V., 1899
Beddingfield, Eva, 1908	Cone, Annie B., 1902
Benton, Willie, 1908	Cone, J.R., 1901
Bergeron, John N., 1899	**Cone, Mrs. Octavia, 1889
Bergeron, Mrs. Mamie, 1890	Conyers, Ralph, 1907
Biggs, R.H., 1899	Coppedge, Mrs. Bob, 1909
Brannon, George N., 1899	Cornwall, J.L., N.D.
Brannon, W.N., 1899	Cornwall, Mrs. Annie, 1898
Brantley, Agnes, 1909	Council, Mrs. Ora, 1899
Brantley, Mrs. Ida, 1899	**Culpepper, W.H., 1889
Brantley, Miss Katie, 1907	Dillard, Miss Pauline, 1907
Brantley, Mrs. Lizzie, 1898	Dodd, Miss Annie, 1901
**Bridges, J.A., 1889	Dodd, John, 1901
Bridgers, A.E., 1892	
**Charter Member	
*Joined first year	

Dodd, Mrs. John, 1901  
 Dudley, Mrs. Savannah, 1901  
 Edwards, Mrs. Delia, 1893  
 Ferrell, H.V., 1893  
 Ferrell, Mrs. M.R., 1893  
 Fulford, Rev. John T., 1892  
 Fulford, W.T., 1899  
 Goode, Dora, 1908  
 Goode, Lewis, 1908  
 Goode, Martha, 1908  
 Goode, Ruby, 1908  
 Goode, S., 1908  
 Goode, Mrs. S., 1908  
 Gordon, Mrs. Fannie, 1899  
 Gordon, W.A., 1899  
 Green, Mrs. Julia, 1893  
 Green, Lee, 1893  
 Griffin, C.M., 1899  
 Griffin, John, 1900  
 Griffin, Miss Katie, 1901  
 Griffin, Lillie, 1904  
 Griffin, Mrs. L.M., 1900  
 Griffin, M.A., 1899  
 Griffin, Mary, 1904  
 Griffin, Mrs. Maud, 1899  
 Griffin, P.C., 1908  
 Griffin, Mrs. Sallie, 1899  
 Harris, James L., 1899  
 Hendricks, Miss Ella, 1899  
 Hendricks, M.R., 1899  
 Hester, Thomas, 1902  
 Hester, Mrs. Thomas, 1901  
 Jackson, C.E., 1908  
 Jones, Miss Minnie, 1905  
 Joyner, Mrs. Ella, 1890  
 Joyner, George W., 1890  
 Lamm, Mrs. Dollie, 1900  
 Lamm, W.W., 1899  
 Lancaster, Lena, 1908  
 Luper, J.D., 1899  
 Luper, Mrs. J.D., 1894  
 Marshbourne, Jim A., 1899  
 Marshbourne, Sam A., 1893  
 May, Mrs. A.F., 1905

May, Mrs. Agnes, 1900  
 May, W.H., 1899  
 May, W.J., 1899  
 May, Mrs. Pollie, 1891  
 Morgan, E.L., 1900  
 Morgan, Mrs. Grace E., 1900  
 Morgan, Mrs. Sadie, 1908  
 Norman, Miss Bettie, 1899  
 Odum, J.H., 1905  
 Odum, Mrs. J.H., 1905  
 \*Owen, Mrs. Eudora M., 1890  
 Parham, Asa, 1903  
 Peace, Miss Annie,  
 Perry, Mrs. Robert, 1898  
 Perry, W.E., 1899  
 Privette, John, 1905  
 Rice, Mrs. Flora, 1897  
 Rice, George H., 1899  
 Rountree, Mrs. Bettie, 1891  
 Ruffin, Mrs., 1907  
 Sanders, Mrs. Pearl S., 1893  
 Sanders, Walter, 1907  
 \*Spivey, J.J., 1890  
 Spivey, Mrs. Sallie B., 1899  
 Stallings, J.M., 1899  
 Stallings, Thomas, 1899  
 Sykes, J.M., 1903  
 Sykes, Mrs. Nannie, 1901  
 Tant, Ruth, 1908  
 Tunnell, H.F., 1908  
 Turnage, Lonnie G., 1899  
 Turnage, Mrs. Lula R., 1899  
 Upchurch, B.W., 1899  
 Upchurch, Mrs. Kate, 1899  
 Vester, E.F., 1908  
 Viverette, Miss Doris, 1901  
 Viverette, Ed, 1907  
 Viverette, Miss Pattie, 1901  
 Weathersby, S., 1905  
 \*Wheless, Mrs. Emily, 1890  
 Wheless, Mrs. Hattie H., 1902  
 Wheless, Mrs. Nannie M., 1907  
 Wheless, Miss Pearl, 1905  
 \*\*Wheless, S.M., 1889  
 Wheless, Mrs. S.M., 1903

\*\*Charter Member

\*Joined first year

Wheless, W.B., 1893  
White, W.R.V., 1908  
Wilder, Mrs. Roxy, 1893

Williams, J.H., 1905  
Wood, Miss Jennie, 1896  
Yarboro, Mrs. Lelia, 1899

\*\*Charter Member

\*Joined first year

1939 marked 50 years of the life of First Baptist Church. This is a list of Sunday School members for 1939-1940. The list may not be complete, but the following names were recorded for October 1, 1939, through September 30, 1940.

The men's class was mixed, all ages:

O.B. Moss, Teacher  
Dr. F.G. Chamblee, Assistant  
B.C. Delbridge  
W.M. Delbridge  
P.E. Daniel  
Theo Easom  
J.J. Gay  
R.T. Geddie  
J.A. Morgan  
A.T. May  
Joe P. Pierce  
J.J. Pitts  
B.F. Wood  
B.E. Morgan  
R.K. Bass  
M.H. Privette  
C.E. Morgan  
G.C. Lassiter  
G.J. May  
Ollie Laughter  
Kermit Dunn  
Will Wheless  
Nick Collie  
R.C. Coppedge

Moses Lamm  
Bayard Hollingsworth  
Dr. J.R. Vann  
R.L. Pitts  
McNair Gaskins  
C.J. Joyner  
Walter Proctor  
C.C. Johnson  
Bruce Sykes  
James L. Strickland  
J.M. Harris  
B.G. Morgan  
R.E. Cummings  
D.C. Weaver  
O.A. Harris  
George Marshbourne  
C.C. Abernathy  
L.T. Bartholomew  
Wiley Valentine  
C.L. Pearson  
Charlie Wilder  
F.D. Bissett  
R.O. Mullen

The elderly ladies' class was designated the grandmothers' class and later became the Senior Fidelis Class and is today the Lillian Finch Class.

Mrs. W.H. Privette, teacher  
Mrs. H. Brantley  
Mrs. O.B. Baines  
Mrs. Theo Easom  
Mrs. A.F. May  
Mrs. Rex Edwards  
Mrs. Sallie Davis  
Mrs. J.W. Delbridge  
Mrs. J.J. Proctor

Mrs. Vance Morgan  
Mrs. Ben Morgan  
Mrs. Nick Collie  
Mrs. Lelia Yarborough  
Mrs. Van B. Weaver  
Mrs. Ella Montgomery  
Mrs. N.E. Ward  
Mrs. Addie Pitts  
Mrs. Martha Moses

Mrs. R.S. Coppedge  
Mrs. John Bergeron

Mrs. Lizzie Brantley  
Mrs. J.A. Tunnell

The Young Married Women listed were:

Mrs. J. Wiley Valentine, Teacher  
Mrs. J.A. Morgan  
Mrs. B.F. Wood  
Mrs. C.C. Abernathy  
Mrs. F.D. Bissett  
Mrs. R.K. Bass  
Mrs. Elmo Edwards  
Mrs. J.E. Upchurch  
Mrs. Bennie Strickland  
Mrs. Edgar May  
Mrs. Fons Gay  
Mrs. Inez Sykes  
Mrs. Turner Moon  
Mrs. L.B. Mauney  
Mrs. James Strickland  
Mrs. Harold Saunders  
Mrs. Mason Field

Mrs. R.L.(Mac) Pitts  
Mrs. G.C. Lassiter  
Mrs. Johnnie Gay  
Mrs. C.L. Pearson  
Mrs. A.T. May  
Mrs. G.W. Bunn, Jr.  
Mrs. C.E. Morgan  
Mrs. Ralph Hales  
Mrs. R.T. Geddie  
Mrs. Elbert Avent  
Mrs. McNair Gaskins  
Mrs. Bonnie Hinton  
Mrs. R.E. Cummings  
Mrs. M.V. Parrish  
Mrs. R.E. Mitchell  
Mrs. C.C. Johnson

The Young Women's Class:

Doris Pearce  
Dorothy Saunders  
Nannie Wheelless  
Wynell Strickland  
Lucille Williams  
Jessie May Luper  
Rachel Brantley  
Mary Helen Easom  
Annie Coppedge  
Loula Hollingsworth  
Ada Valentine  
Grace Strickland  
Mildred Gupton

Betty Moore  
Tuna White Hinton  
Alma Hammond  
Edith Corbett  
Cora Lee Brock  
Corinne Pridgen  
Ernestine Harper  
Mary Anita Pitts  
Melba Gaskins  
Rachel Coppedge  
Fannie Mae Valentine  
Irwin Stott

Young Married Men

M.V. Parrish, Teacher  
Leonard Murray  
Billie Delbridge  
Derby Daniel  
Curtis Daniel  
Braxton Wilder  
G.W. Warren, Jr.  
David Wood  
Harold Saunders  
Brice Wilder  
W.W. Speight

Joseph Bergeron  
Harvey Lamm  
William G. Edwards  
Charles Jackson  
Victor Pearson  
Phil Carter Bunn  
Opie Gray Edwards  
Rex Stevens  
Arthur Wheelless  
Harvey Rix Edwards  
Roy Campbell

Second Year Intermediate Girls:

Mrs. L.B. Mauney, Teacher  
Helen Hales  
Annie Britton Bartholomew  
Dorothy Vester  
Virginia B. Pearson  
Oveda Proctor  
Hazel Williams  
Gladys Winstead  
Marie Cooper  
Lucy Frank Gardner  
Della Mae Pierce

Frances Daniel  
Laura Edwards  
Alice Delbridge  
Martha Moss  
Bobbie Wheless  
Janie Proctor  
Doris Gupton  
Gwendolyn Bryant  
Ellen Williams  
Randolph Gardner  
Ruth Edwards

Second Year Intermediate Boys:

J.M. Sykes, Teacher  
Gerald Weaver  
John Delbridge  
Benjamin Morgan  
Charles Brantley  
Kenneth Pitts  
Hobart Corbett  
Billy Wheless  
Hassell Sledd

Reuben Wheless  
Baxter Finch  
Edward Self  
Robert Lee Pitts  
Bill Edwards  
Vester Harris  
C.L. Pearson, Jr.  
Oliver Paul Gupton  
Carl Lamm

First Year Intermediate Girls:

Mrs. C.R. Speight, Teacher  
Miriam Weaver  
Rachel Brantley  
Florence Bartholomew

Ann Upchurch  
Maxine Bissett  
Isolene Corbett  
Pearl Flowers

First Year Intermediate Boys:

Elmo Edwards, Teacher  
Westray Bunn  
Tom Wheless  
James Vester  
Jack Tant  
John Corbett

Norris Morgan  
Bobby Brantley  
Douglas Strickland  
Allen Frazier  
Earl Bass

First Year Junior Girls:

Mrs. Ed Acree, Teacher  
Elizabeth Ann Gay  
Eloise Edwards

Annie Pearl Brantley  
Martha Ann Green  
Jean Ann Bass



First Year Junior Boys: No teacher named.

Creth Edwards  
William Wilder  
C.C. Johnson  
Aaron Hales  
Judson Finch

Matthew Delbridge  
Gilbert Corbett  
Tommy May  
Joseph Marshbourne

Second Year Primary Students:

Mrs. Henry Brantley, Teacher  
Frances Vester  
George Warren Marshbourne  
Charles Cree Hunter  
Herbert Wheless

Patricia May  
Richard Morgan  
Rudy Johnson  
Alton Cummings

First Year Primary Students:

Mrs. L.T. Bartholomew, Teacher  
Frances Marshbourne  
Mary Lee Brantley  
Julian Upchurch  
Tom Hollingsworth  
Carl Lewis Strickland  
Mary Elizabeth Delbridge

Winnie Edwards  
Phyllis May  
Albert May  
Ann Sellars  
Reginald Moss  
Annie Vince May  
Carol Corbett

Second Year Beginners:

Mrs. W.M. Delbridge, Teacher  
Miss Florence Robinson, Assistant  
Martha Jean Freshwater  
Charles Hollingsworth  
Ann Bridgers Bunn

Frederick Daniel  
Ann Marshbourne  
Katherine Neville  
Virginia Vester

First Year Beginners:

Mrs. B.G. Morgan, Teacher  
Miss Sarah Brantley, Asst.  
Cal Lassiter  
Helen Marshbourne  
Curley Faye Avent  
Frances Bryant  
Louie Mauney  
Derry Edwards

Ted Bissett  
Steve Edwards  
Jimmy Freshwater  
Kay Cummings  
Edgar Warren May  
John Morgan  
Ed Sellars

# September 1, 1988

## 225 Resident Members:

Abernathy, Sadie Mae  
Anderson, Donna Joyce  
Armstrong, C.C.  
Armstrong, Mabel  
Armstrong, Curtis  
Armstrong, Christy

Baker, Curtis  
Baker, Rochelle  
Baker, Mrs. Glennie  
Banks, Carl  
Banks, Annie Clyde  
Banks, Gail  
Bartholomew, Hazel W.

Bass, Otto  
Bass, Valerie  
Best, Clyde  
Best, Donna  
Best, Lori  
Best, Amy  
Bigelow, Virginia M.  
Bissett, Ted  
Bissett, Betty Lane  
Bissett, Dan

Bissett, Lee  
Bissette, Elmo  
Bissette, Ernestine  
Bissette, Woodruff  
Boykin, Alice M.  
Brady, Ed  
Brantley, Bobby  
Brantley, Annie Pearl  
Brantley, Melanie  
Brantley, James Oliver  
Brantley, Linda  
Brantley, Jay  
Brantley, Warren  
Brantley, Eula Lee  
Brogden, Thelma C.  
Bryant, Gwen  
Bunn, G.W.  
Bunn, Gene

Cale, Merle  
Cale, Carolyn  
Carter, Delma G.  
Cobb, Minnie  
Collie, Debora K.  
Cooper, Annie  
Creech, James W., *Pastor*  
Creech, Peggy  
Creech, Jim, Jr.  
Creech, Candace  
Creech, Dustin  
Creekmore, Joan  
Crocker, W.H.  
Crocker, Carol

Daniel, Curtis  
Daniel, Arda  
Daniel, Lois  
Deans, Mrs. Margie  
Delbridge, Denize  
Denton, Annie Vince  
Denton, Jamie  
Driver, Mattie Ruth

Earp, Edward  
Earp, Peggy  
Edwards, Iva  
Edwards, Glenn  
Edwards, Jerri  
Edwards, Johnny T.  
Edwards, Zelma  
Edwards, Mary P.  
Edwards, Susan  
Edwards, Kristie  
Edwards, Kelly  
Edwards, Shannon  
Edwards, Rosene L.  
Edwards, Therman  
Edwards, Rose  
Edwards, Anthony  
Edwards, W.H. (Bill)  
Edwards, Janie

Faircloth, J.C. (Algie)  
Faircloth, Anna  
Finch, Magdalene  
Frazier, C.G.  
Frazier, Nina Joyce

Gaskins, Virginia  
Gay, Jessie Mae  
Geddie, Roland  
Geddie, Delma  
Glover, Sadie  
Greene, Alex  
Greene, Genora

Hagans, Dawn  
Hales, Aaron  
Harris, Terry  
Harris, Ann  
Harris, Kelly  
Harris, Kimberly  
Hawks, Jake  
Hawks, Grayce  
Holley, Al (Rev.)  
Holley, Dorothy  
Honeycutt, A.L.  
Honeycutt, Betty

Inscoc, Dr. Ashby  
Inscoc, Dorothy

Jones, Carvey  
Jones, Nell  
Jones, Rosella  
Jones, Betty  
Joyce, Dorothy  
Joyner, Carol J.  
Joyner, Edna

Knight, Gene  
Knight, Beverly

Laney, Lemuel C.  
Laney, Elizabeth  
Lassiter, Lenore S.  
Laughter, Brucie  
Little, Hazel

Manning, Mildred  
Manning, Anita  
Marshbourne, Geo. W.  
Marshbourne, Helen  
Matthews, Sarah G.  
May, Carrie Leigh  
May, Tommy  
May, Betty Claire  
  
May, Tom, Jr.  
May, Clarie  
May, Steven  
McLaughlin, Dan  
McLaughlin, Catherine  
Morgan, David S.  
Morgan, Barbara  
Morgan, Lena Waller  
Morgan, Lillian Sykes  
Mullen, Reginald O., Sr. (Red)

Mullen, Lucille Person  
Mullen, R.O. Jr.  
Mullen, Donna  
Murray, Leonard W.  
Murray, Reba

Neville, Lela Davenport

Pace, Willard  
Pace, Lucille  
Parrish, Martha Mull  
Parrish, Patrick  
Pearce, Estelle S.  
Perry, James B.  
Perry, Pauline  
Perry, Evelyn  
Pitts, Melba Gaskins  
Price, Sheila Beddingfield  
Pridgeon, Corinne  
Proctor, Ivan  
Proctor, Elizabeth  
Proctor, Paula Bass  
Puckett, Cathy Edwards  
Purkerson, Earl  
Purkerson, Sarah  
Purkerson, Jennifer  
Purkerson, Irene  
Purkerson, Jimmy

Rogers, Carla Bass

Saunders, Dorothy  
 Smith, Donald F.  
 Smith, Annie Drake  
 Stevens, Rex A.  
 Stevens, Faye  
 Strickland, Carl  
 Strickland, Nevada  
 Strickland, Charles  
 Strickland, Myrtle  
 Strickland, Margaret  
 Sutter, Bob  
 Sutter, Sylvia  
 Sutter, Chris  
 Sutter, Angela

Taylor, Ron  
 Toney, Bob  
 Toney, Josephine

Vester, Nannine

Walker, Bruce  
 Walker, Gwenn Chappell  
 Walker, Rhonda  
 Warren, Dr. Julian M.  
 Warren, Maxine  
 Warren, David  
 Warren, Scott  
 Weaver, J.B.  
 Weaver, Imogene  
 Wheless, Hallie Brantley  
 Wheless, Randall

Wheless, Mavis Walker  
 White, Rotha Murray  
 White, Jean  
 Wiggs, Alene  
 Wiggs, B.C.  
 Wiggs, Rosabelle  
 Wiggs, Rosemary  
 Wilder, Elsie Judd  
 Williams, Ed  
 Williams, Myrtle  
 Williams, Ellen  
 Williams, Virginia  
 Williams, Richard  
 Williams, Ann  
 Williams, Robert  
 Williams, Sylvia  
 Wilson, Lynn  
 Winstead, Oveda  
 Winstead, Roy  
 Winstead, Tassie  
 Womble, J.C.  
 Womble, Jean  
 Womble, Amy Jo  
 Wood, David  
 Wood, Doris  
 Wood, Peggy  
 Wood, Steve  
 Woodard, Joe  
 Woodard, Sue  
 Woodard, Paul  
 Woodard, Richard

#### 93 Non-Resident Members, September, 1988

Allen, Allen C. (Rev.)  
 Allen, Terri  
 Allen, Joshua  
 Allen, Jacob  
 Adamski, Linda Proctor  
 Alphin, Sallie Scott

Baker, Carolyn Toney  
 Bland, Mary G.  
 Boone, Aster Marie B.  
 Brantley, Mary Elizabeth  
 Brantley, Pamela  
 Brown, Mary Elizabeth  
 Bunn, Phil Carter

Corbett, John  
 Corbett, Wife  
 Daniel, Curt  
 Delbridge, Andy  
 Dillard, Annie Mae  
 Dosenbach, Sadie Leigh Blount

Edwards, Allen  
 Edwards, Denise  
 Edwards, Randy  
 Edwards, Tammy  
 Edwards, Phil

Farr, Coleman  
 Frazier, Michael  
 Fulser, Nancy Williams  
  
 Gregory, Doris Pierce  
 Guerrieri, Shirley Batchelor

Hayes, Peggy Cooper  
 Hawks, Arnold  
 Hawks, Mary  
 Heflin, Mrs. R.L.  
 Holley, Mark  
 Hollingsworth, Charlie  
 Holt, Jackie Sheppard  
 Honeycutt, Ava L. Jr.  
 Hopkins, Earl

Inscoe, Bruce

Jackson, John  
 Jackson, Jan  
 Jackson, Betty  
 Johnson, Annie Sledge  
 Johnson, Jeff  
 Johnson, Terri  
 Johnson, Ken  
 Johnson, Wife  
 Jones, Belle  
 Jones, Elliot  
 Joyner, James

Lamm, Elmo  
 Lamm, Maude Green  
 Lamm, Mrs, Moses  
 Lassiter, William Stone  
 Lassiter, Calvin  
 Luper, Jimmy

Martin, Mrs. Jerry  
 Matthews, W. Cecil  
 Matthews, Nancy

May, Percy  
 Medlin, Connie Armstrong  
 Miller, Mary Brady  
 Morgan, Norris L.  
 Mos, Allen  
 Murray, Billie Cowan

Neville, Gus, Jr.  
 Neville, Bill  
 Neville, Paula

Pearson, C.L. Jr.  
 Parker, Eva Jane Perry  
 Pitts, Kenneth  
 Privette, David  
 Pyck, Mary Jane Edwards

Sanders, Mary  
 Sheppard, Robert Lee  
 Smith, Donna  
 Stott, Irvin  
 Strickland, Willie  
 Stroud, Kathy  
 Stroud, Kaye

Taylor, Todd  
 Tucker, Nancy Cheaves

Viverette, Cathy Matthews

Walsh, Kathy Bartholomew  
 Warren, Garry  
 Wheless, Billie Ray  
 Wheless, W. Perry, Jr.  
 Wiggs, Tim  
 Wilder, Braxton  
 Williams, Clayton  
 Williams, Greg  
 Williams, Rick

Zabriskie, Margaret Pierce



## LEADERS THROUGH THE YEARS

### Known Church Clerks

S.M. Wheless  
George W. Bunn  
B.E. Morgan  
J.A. Marshbourne  
W.B. Wheless  
Arthur Farmer  
J.E. McLean

F.G. Chamblee  
R.L. Pitts  
Mrs. L.T. Bartholomew  
Mrs. F.D. Bissett  
Miss Mary B. Wheless  
Mrs. R.B. White  
Mrs. Merle Cale

### Known Church Treasurers

J.J. Proctor  
R.L. Pitts  
M.E. Edwards  
Darwin Weaver  
G.C. Lassiter  
Mrs. Paula Proctor

Grover Godwin  
Harold Talton  
J.B. Weaver  
David Morgan  
Mrs. Joe Woodard

### Known Trustees

Dr. F.G. Chamblee  
J.A. Tunnell  
Ben Wood  
Genatus J. May  
B.E. Morgan  
C.E. Jackson  
M.E. Edwards  
R.T. Geddie  
Mr. J.E. Upchurch  
Mrs. J.T. Edwards  
Carl Banks  
Bruce Murray  
Mrs. P.N. Collie  
Mrs. J.A. Morgan  
L.T. Bartholomew  
Robert W. Toney  
B.G. Morgan  
W.M. Delbridge  
P.E. Daniel  
J.A. Morgan  
Bruce Sykes  
Mrs. Gus Neville  
Mrs. Raymond Bass  
Bonnie P. Hinton  
Mrs. Merle Cale

David Wood  
Mrs. Darwin Weaver  
Mrs. F.D. Bissett  
Dr. A.G. Inscoe  
Mrs. Willard Pace  
Jimmy Cobb  
Mrs. J.R. Little  
Earl Purkerson  
Richard Williams  
Alfred Wheless  
J.T. Edwards  
Mrs. McNair Gaskins  
Jason Hawks  
Bruce White  
Mrs. M.E. Edwards  
C.G. Frazier  
Mrs. Carl Strickland  
Rex Stevens  
Woodruff Bisette  
Mrs. Claude Abernathy  
James Oliver Brantley  
Mrs. James Denton  
Mrs. A.G. Inscoe  
Ed Williams  
Carl Banks

### Known Chairmen of Deacons

J.T. Edwards  
Rex Stevens  
Dr. F.G. Chamblee  
William H. Edwards  
Mrs. Julian Warren  
C.G. Frazier  
Therman Edwards

Don Smith  
Ed Brady  
M.V. Parrish  
Tom May  
Earl Purkerson  
Mrs. Terry Harris

### Known Sunday School Directors

J.T. Fulford  
H.G. Harper  
W.A. Egerton  
M.A. Griffin  
J.H. Williams  
A.B. Harrell  
O.B. Moss  
H.J. Massey  
J.J. Proctor  
Arthur Farmer  
E.M. Eustler  
L.T. Bartholomew  
Theo Easom  
Richard Williams  
Therman Edwards  
Mrs. Ted Bissett

M.E. Edwards  
T.H. LeCroy  
M.V. Parrish  
R.E. Cummings  
J.T. Edwards  
Rex Stevens  
William G. Edwards  
E.C. Daniel  
Dr. A.G. Inscow  
R.O. Mullen  
Don Smith  
Ed Brady  
Earl Purkerson  
Clyde Best  
Mrs. M.V. Parrish  
Mrs. Terry Harris

### Known W.M.U. Presidents

Mrs. M.H. Privette  
Mrs. J.A. Marshbourne  
Mrs. B.O. Myers  
Mrs. A.F. May  
Mrs. L.T. Bartholomew  
Mrs. M.V. Parrish  
Mrs. C.E. Morgan  
Mrs. J.T. Edwards  
Mrs. Zeb Jones  
Mrs. Carolyn Sykes  
Mrs. Tommy May

Mrs. J.A. Morgan  
Mrs. M.E. Edwards  
Mrs. N.W. Beddingfield  
Mrs. Charles Glover  
Mrs. Earl Purkerson  
Mrs. Onnie Greene  
Mrs. F.D. Bissett  
Mrs. R.L. Pitts  
Mrs. John Link  
Mrs. Clyde Best

### Tape Ministry Chairmen

Mrs. Mary B. Watts  
Mrs. Glenn Edwards  
Mrs. James B. Perry

Mrs. Gene Knight  
Mrs. J.R. Little

## Known Vacation Bible School Leaders

Miss Virginia Baines  
Miss Aileen Tedder  
Mrs. Bruce Walker (Rachel)  
Mrs. M.V. Parrish  
Mrs. Eleanor Averitte  
Mrs. B.G. Morgan  
Rev. Jimmy Creech

Mrs. J.H. Blackmore  
Dr. Blackmore  
Mrs. Mary Watts  
Rev. Allen Allen  
Mrs. Allen Allen  
Mrs. Bruce Walker (Gwen)

There are surely many others who served in these capacities, but without records to verify, only those for whom records have been located are given here.

L.W.M.

## SOURCES

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"The Letter", Church Newsletter, 1973-1988

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